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NEW HISTORICAL ROMANCE, BY MR. AINSWORTH.

PREPARING FOR PUBLICATION,

WHITEHALL:

A Romance

OF THE

REIGN OF WILLIAM THE THIRD.

BY W. HARRISON AINSWORTH, ESQ.

ILLUSTRATED BY

GEORGE CRUIKSHANK.

JOHN MORTIMER, PUBLISHER, ADELAIDE STREET,
TRAFALGAR SQUARE.

Saint James's:

OR

THE COURT OF QUEEN ANNE.

BY THE EDITOR.

BOOK THE FIRST.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

IN WHICH IT IS SHEWN THAT THE DUCHESS OF MARLBOROUGH HAD NOT ENTIRELY LOST HER INFLUENCE OVER THE QUEEN.

After enjoying for a few seconds the confusion into which the party was thrown by her sudden and unexpected appearance, and darting a scornful and indignant glance at Harley, the Duchess of Marlborough advanced towards the queen, and said in a tone of deep reproach, "Is it come to this, madam? Are my long and faithful services to be thus rewarded?"

"What mean you, duchess?" demanded Anne, vainly endeavouring to hide her embarrassment.

"Do not affect ignorance, madam," replied the duchess, contemptuously. "It will not avail you. I know how, and by whom Mr. Harley was brought here, and why. The scheme was worthy of him—worthy of his hypocritical ally; but unworthy, most unworthy of you. What must the object of the interview be, that requires to be clandestinely conducted? What must it be when the Queen of England blushes—ay, blushes—to be detected in it!"

"No more of this, duchess!" exclaimed Anne, angrily.

"Nay, I *will* speak out, madam," returned the other; "if they are the last words I shall ever utter to you. I will shew you how much you have been deceived by this double-dealing, insidious fellow, who stands abashed in my presence, though he dared just now to lift up his head loftily enough in yours. This miserable turncoat, I say, who now comes to you, would have been glad to make any terms with me. But I rejected his proffer with disdain. I would not use him even as a tool. In revenge, he has recourse to the vilest stratagems, and having reached your majesty by means which only *he*, or some one equally base, would resort to, pours his poison in your ear, which luckily proves as innocuous as it was malignantly and murtherously intended. Let him deny this if he can."

"I *do* deny it," replied Harley, who by this time had fully recovered his composure; "most unequivocally deny it. Your majesty has now heard the duchess out, and I could not desire a better advocate for my cause than she has proved. Setting aside

her false and frivolous charges against myself, which I utterly repudiate and contemn, I would ask your majesty whether my complaint is not fully borne out by her present behaviour? Is her language towards you that of a subject? Is her tone that of a subject? Is her deportment that of a subject? What warrant has she for this intrusion? It is not for the Duchess of Marlborough to dictate to your majesty whom you shall receive, and at what hour you shall receive them. Neither is it for the duchess to thrust herself unasked into your secret conferences. If she knew I was here, and with your gracious permission, she should have carefully kept away. But I rejoice that she has come. I rejoice to be enabled to meet her face to face before your majesty, to tell her that she is wanting in gratitude and respect towards you, and to repeat my flat contradiction to her assertion, which I defy her to prove, that I have made any proposal to her."

"You lie," cried the duchess, transported beyond all bounds, and striking him in the face with her fan.

"Duchess, you forget yourself," interposed the queen quickly, but with dignity.

"I must crave your majesty's permission to retire," said Harley, almost white with constrained passion. "The duchess's tongue is sharp enough, as you have heard; but when she employs weapons which I cannot use, the contest is too unequal to be carried on further."

"I pray you remain, sir," said Anne, beseechingly; "and if the duchess has any desire to please me, she will ask your pardon for her violence."

"I am sorry to disobey you, madam," replied the duchess; "but till Mr. Harley retracts the falsehood he has uttered, I shall do no such thing. Ask his pardon, forsooth! Not I. Let him bear the blow as well as he can. He has borne as much ere now, I'll warrant, and in silence. But I have yet a word more for him. His presence at this clandestine interview, and the arts he has used towards your majesty, constitute a direct breach of faith towards the cabinet to which he belongs; and no honourable alternative remains to him, but to retire from it."

"I shall take leave to hold my post in defiance of your grace, as long as I can be serviceable to her majesty," replied Harley.

"Precisely what might be expected from you, sir," said the duchess; "but your dismissal will follow, nevertheless."

"Your grace's may possibly precede it," retorted Harley.

"An end must be put to this altercation," interposed Anne, peremptorily.

"I crave your majesty's pardon for the share I have been compelled to take in it," rejoined Harley; "and if I venture to prolong it for a few moments, it is because I think some explanation absolutely necessary after the scandalous remarks of the duchess. Whether I adopted unfair means to reach your majesty, you best know; but if I have not proceeded more directly, it has

been because you are so surrounded by the duchess's creatures, that such a course must have been unsuccessful. Of the manner in which this system of espionage is carried on by the duchess, your majesty can form an idea from the fact that the private interview you condescended to grant me to-night, has been disclosed to her. And now, madam, with your gracious permission, I will proceed with what I was saying when this interruption occurred. You yourself have admitted an anxiety to shake off the yoke which your too confiding nature has imposed upon you."

"This cannot be true, madam?" cried the duchess. "Give him the lie—give him the lie."

"Her majesty's silence is sufficient answer," replied Harley. "Does not your grace perceive that by your overweening pride—by your violence, and by your rapacity, you have alienated the affections of a too-indulgent mistress. Nothing but the good-nature upon which you have presumed has enabled you to retain your place. But I tell you in the queen's presence, and in her voice, that it is her wish—her command that you should retire from it."

"Ha!" exclaimed the duchess, with a roar like that of a lioness.

"Mr. Harley, you go too far," said the queen, much alarmed.

"No, your majesty," replied Harley, "I will take all upon my head. I will tell this imperious woman that her reign is over—that you are determined to emancipate yourself from her thraldom—and to be the great queen you ought to be, and are. A moment's resolution will do it. The step is taken. The scene you dreaded *has* occurred. Bid her leave the room, and surrender her places, and you are indeed mistress of your kingdom. Bid her go."

"That word will never be pronounced by the queen, sir," said the duchess, undauntedly.

"Your majesty's freedom hangs on a breath," whispered Abigail. "Recollect how much you have suffered."

"Duchess," said the queen in a voice of emotion, "I must——"

"Before you proceed, madam," interrupted the duchess, "let me have a word. I will not wrong myself by any comparison with the persons I have found in your presence. I hold them as nothing, except so far as your majesty designs to make them of importance. I will not remind you how unceasingly my energies have been devoted to your service—how, ever since you mounted the throne, I have had but one thought—the advancement of your glory——"

"With an occasional bye-reflection as to your own aggrandizement," remarked Harley, sarcastically.

"I will not remind you of my great husband's services in the field and in the state," pursued the duchess, disregarding the remark; "but I will confine myself to the friendship with which I have been honoured for many—many years, and which refers, not to public, but to domestic affairs. Our secret feelings have been

interchanged—our joys, our afflictions have been shared. We have each mourned—mourned in concert—a son lost. Love made us equals. Mrs. Freeman and Mrs. Morley were once dear to each other—very—very dear."

"They were—they were," said Anne, much moved.

"And shall it all be forgotten?" asked the duchess.

"It is Mrs. Freeman's own fault," replied the queen. "She has driven her friend to it."

"She will make any atonement her friend pleases," said the duchess, penitentially; "nay, more, she will promise not to offend again."

"Is it possible!" cried Anne; "if such were really the case——"

"Such really *is* the case," replied the duchess, throwing herself at the queen's feet, who instantly raised her, and embraced her affectionately.

"Dear Mrs. Freeman," exclaimed Anne.

"Dearest Mrs. Morley," cried the duchess.

"This touch of affected tenderness has ruined all," muttered Harley, with a significant glance at Abigail. "Madam," he added to the queen, "I presume I may now retire. My further presence can neither be necessary nor desirable."

"Before you go, sir, I must insist upon a reconciliation between you and the duchess," said the queen. "Nay, duchess, you were wrong, and it is for you to make the advance. What, you hesitate? Will Mrs. Freeman refuse Mrs. Morley's request?"

"That appeal is irresistible," replied the duchess. "Mr. Harley, I was too hasty." And she extended her hand to him.

"I take your grace's hand as it is given," replied Harley, advancing towards her. "This is a harder blow than the other," he added in a low tone.

The duchess smiled triumphantly.

"Henceforth, all hostilities must cease between you," said the queen.

"Willingly, on condition that this is the last private interview between your majesty and Mr. Harley," rejoined the duchess.

"Willingly, on condition that her grace always maintains her present amiable deportment," subjoined Harley. "Mrs. Freeman is infinitely to be preferred to the Duchess of Marlborough."

"Peace being restored, I shall retire," said the queen, smiling.

"What, without a word in private with your poor faithful Freeman," whispered the duchess, coaxingly.

"To-morrow," replied the queen. "I am too much fatigued now. This interview has quite exhausted me. Good night, Mr. Harley. Abigail will see you forth."

So saying, and returning the secretary's profound bow, she withdrew with her attendant.

The duchess and Harley regarded each other for some moments fixedly in silence.

"Either you or I must retire from this contest, Mr. Harley," said the former, at length.

"It is not for me to tell your grace which of the two it shall be," he replied. "But I have no intention of withdrawing."

"Then I know how to act," said the duchess.

"There is no chance of a coalition, I suppose?" he insinuated, in his smoothest tones.

"With you—never!" replied the duchess, contemptuously.

At this moment, Abigail returned.

"I wish your grace good night," said the secretary, bowing ceremoniously.

"Good night, sir," replied the duchess. "I will take care this is the last time you are seen here."

"Heed her not," said Abigail, as they quitted the room; "the queen is as much your friend as ever. Fulfil my injunctions respecting Mr. Masham implicitly, and you shall have another interview as soon as you please."

CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

OF THE PROVOCATION OFFERED BY MASHAM TO THE MARQUIS DE GUISCARD AT THE SAINT JAMES'S COFFEE-HOUSE; AND OF THE CHALLENGE THAT ENSUED.

A deeper impression had been made by Abigail upon Masham than he cared to acknowledge. Having persuaded himself that he should think of her no more, he was vexed to find her image perpetually recurring to his mind, and in order to destroy the effect produced by her charms, he aggravated her coquetry, and heightened every vexatious circumstance that had occurred at the ball; but all would not do. He could not render himself indifferent to her, and her very capriciousness seemed to make her more attractive. A ride in the park having failed in distracting his thoughts, he repaired to the Saint James's Coffee-house, where he found the Earl of Sunderland conversing very eagerly with a gentleman of good figure, and remarkably intelligent countenance, who was well known to him as Mr. Arthur Maynwaring.

Descended from a branch of a very old Cheshire family, which had settled at Ightfield, in Shropshire, and connected on the maternal side with the ancient and important families of the Egertons and Cholmondeleys, Mr. Maynwaring was as much distinguished for his high-breeding and polished exterior, as for his wit, scholarship, and general ability. He was an admirable political writer; a keen satirist and critic; and his judgment on all matters of taste and learning was considered indisputable. Maynwaring was a member of the Kit-Cat Club, and accounted

one of its chief ornaments. His private income was but trifling, his estates being heavily incumbered; but he had recently received a lucrative appointment as auditor of the imprests from Lord Godolphin. He sat in parliament as member for Preston in Lancashire, and being completely in the confidence of the Duchess of Marlborough, frequently acted as her private secretary. His age was thirty-nine.

The earl and his companion looked up on Masham's entrance, and their manner convinced him that he himself formed the subject of their discourse. Nor was he wrong; for as he was passing on to another part of the coffee-room, Sunderland called to him, and said, "We were speaking of you, Masham, and I have been diverting Maynwaring with an account of what occurred at the palace last night."

"'Tis just the way Abigail serves every one," laughed Maynwaring. "And I have no doubt for all the encouragement she gave Guiscard, who has a right now to fancy himself the suitor elect, she will scarcely deign to notice him to-day. Who would be a slave to such a capricious creature?"

"Ay, who indeed?" echoed Sunderland, laughing.

Masham could not repress a sigh.

"For the credit of our sex, I hope you wont let her perceive that you care for her," said Maynwaring, noticing the other's emotion.

"If Masham feels himself in danger, let him absent himself from court for a few days," observed Sunderland.

"No, that would never do," rejoined Maynwaring. "A thousand jests would be in circulation at his expense, and he would never survive the ridicule. No, he must stay and boldly face the enemy. The true way to mortify her, will be to affect perfect indifference, and whatever lures she may throw out, whatever wiles practise, appear utterly insensible to them."

"I should be better pleased to pique her as she piqued me," returned Masham, "by paying attention to another."

"You are not master enough of yourself for that," said Maynwaring. "No, indifference, real or affected, must be your game. He is in love with her," he observed in a low voice to Sunderland, as Masham stepped aside for a moment.

"Evidently so," replied the other in the same tone. "If they meet, a reconciliation will infallibly take place. It must be our business to prevent it, till she is fully compromised with Guiscard. If we could but get him away for a week."

"Ah! but he wont go," returned Maynwaring, laughing.

"Again amusing yourselves at my expense, gentlemen," observed Masham, returning.

"I was merely observing to Sunderland," replied Maynwaring, "that I think Abigail's influence with the queen vastly overrated."

"I'm sure of it," replied the earl; "Guiscard will find out

his error if he thinks to secure his own advancement by marrying her. When she weds, she will necessarily lose her place."

"Not necessarily, I believe," observed Masham.

"Oh, yes," rejoined Maynwaring. "But what matters it? The French adventurer will be rightly served."

"I should not mind her loss of place, if she had a heart," sighed Masham, "but she evidently has none."

"Not a bit more than Guiscard himself," replied Maynwaring, "so they will be nicely matched. Adsdeath! here comes the marquis."

As the exclamation was uttered, Guiscard, accompanied by Saint John and Prior, entered the coffee-room. As the new-comers drew near, Saint-John said, laughingly, "Good day, gentlemen; I've a piece of news which will delight you all, especially Masham. We are to have a marriage at court."

"A marriage!" exclaimed Maynwaring. "Between whom?"

"Between Monsieur le Marquis de Guiscard and the fair Abigail Hill," replied Saint-John. "Here he is, to receive your congratulations."

"Is it settled, then?" asked Masham, hastily.

"Mr. Saint-John is, perhaps, going a little too far in saying that it is actually arranged," replied Guiscard; "but I hope the marriage will not be long delayed."

"Accept our best wishes for the speedy completion of your happiness, marquis," said Sunderland and Maynwaring together.

"'Sdeath, Masham," cried Prior, "why don't you offer your congratulations likewise? The marquis will be a great man presently, and it is prudent and proper to worship the rising sun."

"Let those worship it who like. I want nothing from him," replied the young equerry, walking moodily away.

"A disappointed rival!" said Sunderland to Guiscard. "Ah! marquis, you are a lucky fellow!"

"Deuced lucky!" cried Maynwaring. "You haven't decided yet for Whig or Tory, I presume?"

"Pardon me," replied Prior. "Guiscard is with us. And if Sunderland finds some one in his post within a month, he will know who placed him there."

A loud laugh followed this sally.

"Gentlemen," said Masham, returning quickly, and looking angrily round, "I should be glad to know the cause of your merriment."

"Ha! ha! ha!" was the general response.

"This young Masham thinks everybody is laughing at him to-day," said Sunderland. "On the contrary, my good fellow, we sincerely condole with you—Ha! ha!"

"Your mirth has but slight grounds for it, my lord," replied Masham, sternly. "You are willing to take Guiscard's word for his acceptance by Miss Hill. For my own part, I doubt it."

"How, sir?" cried the marquis.

"I more than doubt it," pursued Masham, loudly and emphatically,—"I believe it to be wholly false!"

The laughter was instantly hushed, and some other persons, who chanced to be in the coffee-room at the time, gathered round the group.

"Pshaw, my dear Masham," said Maynwaring, "you let your vexation at our friend's success carry you too far. Marquis, you will make due allowance for his disappointed feelings."

"Most assuredly," replied Guiscard; "I am willing to take no notice of the affront. Masham knows not what he says."

"You shall not get off thus, marquis," rejoined Masham, with increasing anger. "I repeat—deliberately repeat—that you have imposed upon this company."

"Mr. Masham hopes to cut my throat, in order to remove an obstacle between him and Miss Hill," observed Guiscard, with suppressed anger, "but I will try to disappoint him."

"You are quite in the wrong, Masham," said Sunderland, taking the young equerry aside,—"on my honour, you are. Granting that this vain-glorious Frenchman has advanced more than he has warrant for, you will only give Abigail new cause for triumph by thus playing the Quixote for her. Allow me to reconcile matters. I can do so at once, without compromising you in the slightest degree."

"I will only retract what I have said on receiving from Miss Hill's own lips a confirmation of the marquis's statement," replied Masham, sullenly.

"Pshaw, you know that it is impossible," said the earl. "Be reasonable."

The young equerry shook his head.

"Since there is no help for it, gentlemen, and since Mr. Masham is deaf to my remonstrances, I suppose you must meet," said Sunderland, turning round.

"Most certainly, my lord," replied the marquis,—"most certainly we must meet. And I trust no one here will attempt to interfere. We are all men of honour."

There was a slight responsive murmur among the company, and those who were strangers immediately withdrew.

"Mr. Maynwaring, may I count upon you as my friend?" said Masham.

"Unquestionably," was the reply, "though I confess I would rather assist to settle the matter in any other way. But since that may not be, I shall be happy to attend you."

"And I conclude I may calculate on you, Mr. Saint-John?" said the marquis.

Saint-John bowed.

"Where, and at what hour, shall the meeting take place, gentlemen?" he inquired.

"As early as is agreeable to the marquis," replied Masham, "and in Hyde Park, if he has no objection."

"Hyde Park will suit me as well as any other place," replied Guiscard, "and the earlier the better; because, as I shall sit up till the hour of meeting, I shall get to bed the sooner."

"That remains to be seen," rejoined Masham. "At all events, you may get to rest."

"These preliminaries arranged, gentlemen," said Saint-John, "I presume you can meet without annoyance to each other. And I therefore beg the favour of your company at supper to-night, as well as that of all our friends here. A few choice spirits have promised to come to me; and when I tell you I expect Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Oldfield, I am sure I need offer you no further inducement."

The invitation was eagerly accepted by all except Masham, who would willingly have declined it, but Maynwaring whispering him that his refusal might be misconstrued, he reluctantly assented; and, after a little further conversation, the party separated.

CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

OF THE ASSEMBLAGE OF WITS MET BY MASHAM AT SUPPER AT MR. SAINT-JOHN'S, AND OF THE MEANS PROPOSED BY HIM OF ADJUSTING A QUARREL BETWEEN MRS. BRACEGIRDLE AND MRS. OLDFIELD.

Having dined alone, and made such preparations as he thought necessary for the meeting of the morrow, Masham betook himself, about ten o'clock, to Saint-John's residence in Saint James's-place. The party, which was more numerous than he expected, had already sat down to table, but a place was reserved for him between Maynwaring and Prior, into which he slipped as quietly as he could. Most of the guests were known to Masham personally, and all by reputation; and as he surveyed the assemblage, which comprised many of the most eminent wits of the day, he could not but feel that he had little title to a place among them.

At the head of the table, as a matter of course, was Saint-John, who appeared in most buoyant spirits, and on his right sat a lady with a most fascinating expression of countenance, fine dark eyes of extraordinary brilliancy, and hair and eyebrows of the same shade. Though a brunette, her complexion had a rich bloom in it, and though in the maturity of life her charms had lost none of their attraction. Her smile was witchery itself, as thousands who had felt it make its way at once to the heart, could testify. This was the admirable actress, Mrs. Anne Bracegirdle, than whom a lovelier or more accomplished woman never trod the boards.

On her right sat a gentleman of very courtly appearance, and possessing handsome, smooth features, who paid her the most devoted attention, and who was addressed by her as Mr. Congreve. Next to Congreve sat another wit, but scarcely so polished in manner,

or so regularly handsome, though his features were fine and intellectual notwithstanding, and he was quite equal to the other in comic genius. Sir John Vanbrugh—for he it was—was conversing with an elderly man, who, notwithstanding a stoop in the shoulders, the total absence of teeth, and deep wrinkles in the cheeks, which defied the power of rouge and paint to efface, affected the air of a youthful beau, and wore a dress made in the extravagance of the fashion, with a point-lace cravat, point-lace ruffles, and a flowing peruke, while costly rings bedecked his fingers. In this antiquated figure, whose shaking limbs and blear eyes seemed ill fitted for the revel, could scarcely be recognised the once-handsome, and still witty friend of Sedley, Rochester, Etherege, and Buckingham, the boon companion of the Merry Monarch himself, whose good looks and brilliant reputation had won him the hand of the young, wealthy, and beautiful Countess of Drogheda, and whose comedies are scarcely, if at all, inferior to those of Congreve and Vanbrugh,—namely, William Wycherley.

On Wycherley's other hand was a young man of rather prim air, and plain attire, but whose looks bespoke shrewdness and good sense, and whose name was Tickell. He was paying profound attention to the discourse of his neighbour, a handsome man, with a florid complexion, and a somewhat stout person, displayed to advantage in a suit of peach-coloured velvet, and who was no less than the illustrious Joseph Addison. The great essayist, who had not, however, at that time given to the world the full assurance of his unequalled powers, but was chiefly known by his travels, his poem entitled the "Campaign," and a trifling opera called "Rosamond," filled the post of under-secretary to the Earl of Sunderland, who had continued him in the office on his succession to Sir Charles Hedges, from whom Addison originally received the appointment. Addison's neighbour, on the right, was the gay, the social, the kindly, the thoughtless Richard Steele, upon whose excitable temperament the pleasures of the table and the deep libations that succeeded (for those were hard-drinking days) had already produced a far more pernicious effect than upon his phlegmatic friend, the under-secretary. Captain Steele, for he had recently procured a commission in Lord Lucas's regiment, through the interest of his friend, the brave Lord Cutts, was chiefly occupied at that time in conducting the *Gazette*, in which his chief aim, according to his own account, was to be "as innocent and insipid as possible;" and it must be owned his success was fully equal to his intentions. Steele had been for some time a widower, but was now paying attention to Miss Scurlock, to whom he was subsequently united. The dissolute life he had led had left its impression on his features, which, though puffy and cadaverous, were expressive. He had black overhanging brows, deep-set eyes, and a broad and somewhat coarse visage. His

figure was thick-set and square, and his attire such as belonged to his military rank.

Captain Steele's attentions were directed towards his neighbour, a young and singularly-beautiful woman, with a slight but graceful figure, and an archness of look and manner that was perfectly irresistible. This was Mrs. Bracegirdle's rival, Mrs. Oldfield, who had lately risen into fame, and divided the town with her. All Steele's gallantries, however, were thrown away. Mrs. Oldfield had ears and eyes only for the soft speeches and tender glances of Mr. Maynwaring, who sat on her right, and with whom, it may be mentioned in passing, she afterwards formed a long and lasting attachment only closed by his death.

Passing over Maynwaring, Masham, Prior, and Sunderland, we come to the tragic poet, Nicholas Rowe, the author of the "Fair Penitent," whose somewhat saturnine countenance was convulsed with laughter at the jests of his neighbour, the facetious Tom D'Urfey, who, like Wycherley, was one of the wits of the previous century, and upon whose shoulders Charles the Second himself had often leaned, to hum a snatch. No one, indeed, in former days could troll a ditty more merrily than old Tom; nor could any one write a choicer song of the amorous and convivial description in vogue when he was in his prime. Like Wycherley, Tom D'Urfey was a good deal the worse for wear. The wonder would have been if he were not, considering the rollicking, reckless life he had led; but in spite of rheumatism, flying gout, and other aches and pains, it would be difficult to find a jollier old fellow than Tom, or one who enjoyed the good things of life more, or deserved them better. He was somewhat shabbily attired it is true, for Tom was not one of your prosperous wits. But what of that? His coat might be threadbare, but his jests were fresh and glossy, and far more genial than those of the refined and freezing Congreve; and as to his laugh, it was joviality itself. Tom D'Urfey had truly a lyrical genius, and was utterly free from the affectation which is the besetting sin of modern ballad-mongers; but he was besides an indefatigable labourer for the stage, and composed in his time above thirty comedies, all, or most of which, are forgotten. Alas! poor Tom! there is but a faint and far-off echo of thee and thy pleasantries in these degenerate days. Guiscard was D'Urfey's neighbour, and next to the marquis sat Mrs. Centlivre, the witty authoress of several excellent but licentious comedies, —though no more licentious than the taste of the time required, —three of which, "The Busy-Body," "The Wonder: a Woman Keeps a Secret," and "A Bold Stroke for a Wife," still keep their hold of the stage. Mrs. Centlivre had some little personal beauty, and had been thrice married, her last husband, Mr. Joseph Centlivre, being yeoman of the mouth, otherwise cook to the late King William the Third. Her latest comedy, the "Platonic

Lady," had just been produced with some success at the Haymarket. Mrs. Centlivre's right-hand neighbour was Sir Samuel Garth, the celebrated poet and physician, a man as much esteemed for his amiable and social qualities as for his professional talent and poetical ability. Garth was a stout, handsome-looking man, with large features, of the mould which seem so peculiar to the period in which he flourished, and was attired in black velvet. On his further side sat another lady, the fourth and last that the party comprehended, and who was likewise a writer of dramatic works, which had procured her some reputation, though she subsequently became far more notorious by the production of the "New Atalantis." Though in the hey-day of her life, Mrs. Manley, had little more than her wit to recommend her; but she had great conversational powers, and a turn for satire, which combined with an intimate acquaintance (how derived is not worth inquiring) with what was going on in the political world, and the world generally, gave great piquancy to her discourse. In our own days, she would unquestionably have made a first-rate fashionable novelist. Next to Mrs. Centlivre sat Mr. Godfrey Kneller, the great painter, (Kneller received his baronetage from George the First,)—a man of courtly appearance, handsome person and features, though a little on the decline, and most refined manners; and next to Kneller was Mr. Hughes, a scholar and a poet, then chiefly known by his elegant translations of Horace and Lucan, but subsequently distinguished by his tragedy, called the "Siege of Damascus," and the papers he contributed to the Tatler, the Spectator, and the Guardian. And with him the circuit of the table is completed.

The repast was magnificently served, as well as admirable and abundant. A crowd of lacqueys in Saint-John's sumptuous livery were in attendance. The table groaned with the finest chased silver dishes, and sparkled with crystal glass; and as dish after dish of exquisite flavour disappeared, delicacies still more tempting succeeded. The wines were poured forth in equal profusion, and the produce of the choicest vintages of France, Spain, Germany, and even Hungary, was quaffed in bumpers. No one's glass was allowed to stand empty a moment, and there was a constant discharge of champagne corks. An incomparable host was Saint-John. He had none of the airs of a petit-maitre, leaving his guests to shift for themselves, but did the honours of his table hospitably and well. By his sprightly sallies he kept up an incessant roar of laughter, and the only person upon whose brow a slight cloud could be discerned, and who appeared to have no zest for the rich viands or the delicious wines, was Masham.

"Mr. Masham looks like the rejected lover in a comedy," observed Mrs. Bracegirdle, in her exquisite voice, which gave to words of little import significance the most extraordinary.

"Nay, by my faith," cried Saint-John, "it is not acting with him. Masham is foolish enough to love a woman after she has

agreed to give her hand to another; and, what is more, nothing will content him but the life of his fortunate rival."

"You are too hard upon the young gentleman, Mr. Saint-John," said Mrs. Oldfield, whose accents were quite as musical and delicious as those of Mrs. Bracegirdle; "if he is really in love, he is much to be pitied. I vow he is the only person here who knows anything of the passion, unless it be Mr. Tickell. If your lady-love has jilted you, sir, forget her, or supply her place with another."

"I could easily do that, Mrs. Oldfield," replied Masham, gallantly.

"I hope you don't mean to be so silly as to risk your life for her?" pursued the lady.

"Permit me the honour of wine with you," rejoined Masham, evasively.

"With great pleasure," she replied, "but I must have an answer to my question. Some women like to be the cause of a duel; but I should hate the man who fought for me; or rather I should hate myself, which would come to the same thing. Ladies, let us take Mr. Masham under our special protection. It would be a thousand pities if so pretty a fellow were cut off in the flower of his youth, and all for a senseless jilt. Your voices, I'm sure, will be with me. Fight he must not."

"Certainly not," cried the three other ladies in a breath.

"You hear, sir," said Mrs. Oldfield. "We are four to one. You cannot disoblige so many fair supplicants. And now, let us know who is your rival?"

"You will make me his rival if you go on thus," remarked Maynwaring, somewhat petulantly.

"Mrs. Oldfield is bent upon a conquest, it seems," observed Mrs. Bracegirdle, in a low tone, to Saint-John.

"A glance from you will win him from her," replied the other; "you have often carried off a whole house in the same way."

"I'll try," said Mrs. Bracegirdle, "if only to mortify the vain thing. Mr. Masham," she continued, aloud, and throwing one of her irresistible glances at him, "I am curious to know what sort of person it is that has inspired you with so deep a passion."

"Ay, do tell us, Mr. Masham?" said Mrs. Centlivre.

"She is young and beautiful, of course?" cried Mrs. Manley.

"And wealthy, also, it is to be hoped?" added Mrs. Centlivre.

"Do—do describe her?" cried Mrs. Oldfield. "Does she resemble any of us—Mrs. Bracegirdle, for instance?"

"Or Mrs. Oldfield?" rejoined the other actress.

Here there was a general laugh.

"Masham will have a second duel on his hands ere long, I begin to think," said Congreve, glancing at Mrs. Bracegirdle.

"He will have a third," rejoined Maynwaring, "and will have to provide himself with another second, for I shall be obliged to take part as a principal."

"Really, gentlemen, I am unconscious of giving you offence," said Masham.

"I'll take Mr. Congreve's quarrel off your hands," said Mrs. Bracegirdle. "If he fights any one, it shall be me."

"And since Mr. Maynwaring has thrown up his office, I shall be happy to attend you as second," said Mrs. Oldfield. "I can manage an affair of the kind quite as well as him. As for swords, I've plenty at your service, and pistols too, if needed. You shan't blush for your second, for I'll come in my town gallant's apparel. You remember *Betty Goodfield*, in the "Woman turned Bully." 'Udsbud, sir," she added, assuming the look and tone of the character, "do you come here only to ask questions? This is not to be endured. You have wasted my whole stock of patience, and now you shall find me an arrant lion. Come, sir, draw.'"

This speech, delivered in the liveliest manner imaginable, elicited thunders of applause from the assemblage.

"Mr. Masham will prove irresistible, if so attended," said Wycherley. "'Gad! I thought the modern stage degenerate, but I find the old spirit of Nell Gwyn and Mrs. Kneppe revived in Mrs. Oldfield."

"With a little more discretion, I hope, Mr. Wycherley," replied the pretty actress.

"Ah! Mr. Wycherley," cried Tom D'Urfey, "things are greatly changed since those inimitable plays, the "Country Wife" and the "Plain Dealer" were given to the world. It's full thirty years since the last made its appearance; and if you had had any industry, or any necessity, you would have given us a comedy every successive year, and then how rich our drama would have been! Talking of the "Plain Dealer," how well I recollect Hart as *Manly*, Kynaston as *Freeman*, Mrs. Cory as *Widow Blackacre*—wondrous *Widow Blackacre*—and Kneppe, pretty Mrs. Kneppe, as *Eliza!* You should give us another comedy before you quit the stage altogether sir."

"I shall marry and give you a farce, Tom," replied Wycherley, with some acerbity. "But why don't you appeal to Mr. Congreve? No man has written such comedies, and yet he has forsworn the stage."

"Don't remind me of the indiscretions of my youth, Wycherley," replied Congreve. "I've seen the error of my ways, and mean to avoid it in future."

"Congreve has been converted by Collier, though he answered him so sharply at the time of the attack," said Vanbrugh, laughing, "and thinks the theatres licentious and profane."

"Their morals will certainly remain questionable as long as you continue to write for them, Van," rejoined Congreve.

"'Sdeath!" cried Vanbrugh, "Am I to paint men and manners as they *are*, or as they *are not?*"

"You paint them in colours so true, that your portraits will endure for ever, Sir John," observed Kneller. "When people become over fastidious, it is a bad sign of the morality of the times."

"One thing is quite certain," remarked Addison, "that the English stage owes its revival to the genius of the two great comic writers here present, and if they had not exerted their matchless powers for its support, it is doubtful whether we should not have altogether been deprived of a most delightful and highly intellectual amusement. No, Mr. Congreve, the stage owes you too much to allow you to disown your connexion with it."

"I am sorry to say it in the presence of so many distinguished dramatists," cried Congreve, "but on my soul I cannot think writing for the stage the employment of a gentleman."

"Oh! fie, Mr. Congreve," rejoined Rowe; "this is rank heresy in you, and worse than abusing a woman who has bestowed her favours upon you. A fine play is the noblest achievement of the human mind."

"The author of the Fair Penitent and Tamerlane has a right to say so," remarked Garth. "I can well understand that Mr. Congreve, having obtained so high a reputation, should not care to shake it, but that he should underrate the drama, for which he has done so much, passes my comprehension."

"I do not underrate the drama, Sir Samuel," replied Congreve, "nor do I shrink from the stage from fear of failure, but from distaste. I dislike notoriety, and if I could do twenty times better than I have done, I would not write again; nay, I am sorry I ever wrote a line."

"Is he sincere, think you?" asked Guiscard of Prior.

"As sincere as you would be," replied the poet; "if, after winning ten thousand pounds at hazard, you were to say you would never play again, and protest you wished you never *had* played. He is prudent, and does not wish to lose what he has gained. Besides, with a strange kind of vanity, he values himself more upon being thought a fine gentleman than an author."

"Fortunately for us, my dear Congreve, your wish not to have written comes too late for fulfilment," said Saint-John. "It would be well, perhaps, if some of us could recall our early effusions, but you are not of the number. But we are neglecting the wine. Captain Steele I pledge you."

"My service to you," replied Steele, taking off a brimmer. "Mr. Congreve is right on one point," he continued. "The great secret is to know when to leave off. An entrance is more easily made than an exit. But though I hold this to be a sound rule, I don't mean to act up to it myself, but shall go on as long as I can find an audience to listen to me, or a bookseller to purchase my wares. Both will soon let me know when they have had enough."

"Ay, it was ever your rule, Dick, to declaim like a philosopher in public, and to act like a rake in private," rejoined Addison.

"There I only imitate you, Addison," replied Steele, "who write in praise of temperance in a style as pure and clear as water itself, with a bottle of wine before you."

"That shan't prevent my taking a glass with you now, you scandalous dog," replied Addison; "what shall it be—burgundy?"

"Ay, burgundy," replied Steele; "'tis a generous wine, and rolls in one's veins like the hot blood of youth."

Soon after this, the cloth was removed, and bowls of punch, mulled burgundy, and claret, were placed on the board. Tom D'Urfey volunteered a song, and although his voice was a little cracked, executed one of his old anacreontic melodies very creditably. Mrs. Bracegirdle was next prevailed upon to sing, and roused her hearers to a state of rapture, which was by no means lessened when her fair rival, Mrs. Oldfield, followed her in a voice of surpassing richness and sweetness. Each lady was most vociferously applauded in her turn, their mutual supporters trying to outvie each other in the expression of their admiration. Saint-John, whose spirits appeared inexhaustible, and who was the soul of a revel, as of aught else he engaged in, took care that the exhiliration of the party should receive no check, and so well did he fan the flame of mirth, that it blazed up more joyously each moment, and spread so fast and freely, that even Masham caught the infection, forgot his anxieties, and laughed as loudly and heartily as the rest.

By this time, the various generous liquors had begun to produce an effect upon the company; the conversation became a little more noisy, and the laughter rather more uproarious. Perfect decorum, however, was observed; but there were more talkers than listeners, and Tom D'Urfey, in spite of the assistance of the host, could not obtain attention for another stave. To hide his disappointment, during a momentary lull of the clatter, he called upon Mrs. Oldfield, but an opposition was instantly made by the supporters of Mrs. Bracegirdle, who said she was under a promise to them, and their rights could not be deferred. In vain Saint-John interposed; the dispute instantly rose to a fiery heat, and many sharp speeches were interchanged, when a happy idea occurred to the host.

"A means of settling this matter occurs to me, ladies," he said. "Will you leave it to Mr. Masham to decide who shall sing first?"

Both immediately expressed their assent, and turned to the young equerry, who looked as much puzzled as the shepherd Paris, when required to bestow the golden apple upon the fairest goddess. Without giving himself, however, more than a moment's consideration, he named Mrs. Bracegirdle, who, radiant with triumph, began to pour forth strains like those of a syren. But she was not allowed to proceed far, for Mrs. Oldfield, who was

Trial of skill between Mrs. Bracegirdle and Mrs. Oldfield at Mr. Saint Johns supper.

LONDON. JOHN MORTIMER ADELAIDE STREET. 1844.

deeply mortified, began to talk and laugh aloud to Maynwaring, upon which the fair singer instantly stopped, and in spite of Saint-John's entreaties refused to proceed,—her anger being increased by the insulting looks of her rival.

"We have been talking of duels just now," she cried; "I wish they were allowed amongst women. I should like to punish the insolence of that creature."

"Don't baulk yourself, if you are so disposed, my dear," rejoined Mrs. Oldfield, with a sarcastic laugh. "I will meet you whenever and wherever you please; and as we are both accustomed to it, we can put on male attire, and fancy ourselves of the opposite sex for the occasion."

"I wish you would dare to make good your word, madam," replied Mrs. Bracegirdle.

"If you doubt me, and are in a hurry, my dear," replied Mrs. Oldfield, "you have but to step into the next room, and we can settle the matter at once."

"Here will be a pretty piece of work," cried Prior; "a duel between our two fairest actresses. Whoever survives, we shall be losers."

"'Sdeath, this passes a jest," exclaimed Saint-John.

"We will fight with pistols," cried Mrs. Oldfield, heedless of Maynwaring's remonstrances. "I have practised at the mark, and am a dead shot."

"Agreed," replied Mrs. Bracegirdle; "I am as good a shot as yourself."

"What say you to arranging the affair in this way, ladies?" interposed Masham. "You both profess to be good shots. I will hold a candle, and you shall post yourselves at the extremity of the room, and she who snuffs it shall be adjudged the victor."

"I assent," said Mrs. Oldfield.

"But you will run a great risk, Mr. Masham," cried Mrs. Bracegirdle.

"Oh! I'll take my chance," he replied, laughingly. "Better I should receive a slight wound than the stage be deprived of one of its brightest ornaments."

The young equerry's gallantry was much applauded, and Mrs. Bracegirdle assenting with some reluctance to the arrangement, a brace of pistols were produced, and all impediments being quickly cleared away, Masham took up a candle, and marched to the further end of the room, where he took up a position, and stretched out his arm. All being now ready, Mrs. Bracegirdle begged her rival to take the first shot. Mrs. Oldfield instantly raised her pistol, levelled, and fired.

The shot was so true, that the flame wavered, and a burst of applause followed.

As soon as this had subsided, Mrs. Bracegirdle took her rival's place. But just as she had levelled the pistol, a trembling seized her, and she dropped her arm.

"I cannot do this," she cried, "I should never forgive myself

if I hurt that young man, and would rather own myself vanquished than put him in danger."

On this, the applause was louder and more vehement than before, and at its close Mrs. Bracegirdle said, "To show that I am not without some skill, I will make an attempt, which can endanger no one. There is a small white spot on the upper pannel of yon door, not larger than a shilling. Be that my mark."

And as she spoke, she again raised the pistol quickly, and drew the trigger. The wood was perforated in the precise spot indicated by the fair shooter, but there was a general expression of consternation and surprise, as the door opened, and Harley walked into the room.

CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

THE PARTY IS INCREASED BY THE UNEXPECTED ARRIVAL OF MRS. HYDE AND HER DAUGHTER—THE CAUSE OF THEIR VISIT EXPLAINED.

"An inch lower," cried the secretary, taking off his hat, which was pierced quite through with a small round hole, "and that bullet would have been lodged in my brain. Another time, pretty Mrs. Bracegirdle must choose a safer place for pistol-practice, or she may chance to do a mischief."

The fair actress eagerly tendered her apologies to Harley, while the others congratulated him upon his narrow escape; and the cause of the shot having been explained, he laughed heartily.

"The victory must be adjudged to you, my dear Mrs. Bracegirdle," he said to her; "for though Mrs. Oldfield has displayed equal skill, you have shewn the greatest consideration."

"It is very generous in you to say so, at all events, Mr. Harley," observed Mrs. Oldfield, pettishly.

"Expert as you are, ladies," said Saint-John, "I hope that henceforth you will abandon pistols, and confine yourselves to those scarcely less dangerous weapons your eyes."

"Glances may do very well for your sex, but for our own, powder and ball are required," rejoined Mrs. Bracegirdle.

"Well, the quarrel is honourably adjusted," said Saint-John. "So kiss and be friends."

Thus urged, the ladies complied. But it was easy to see from the toss of the head on one side, and the shrug of the shoulder on the other, that the truce was a very hollow one.

The company then resumed their seats at table, and Harley placed himself by the host, who, while he circulated the glass as rapidly as before, and promoted the conversation as much as was requisite, contrived to hold a whispered discourse with him. Harley's brow became clouded at some information he received, and his glance, taking the direction of Masham, shewed that what he had heard related to him.

Soon after this, Sunderland and Kneller arose, declaring they had drunk enough; while Guiscard called for cards, upon which Saint-John rang for the attendants, and the folding-doors being thrown open, disclosed a magnificent saloon, blazing with lustres, and in which stood several card-tables.

Into this room most of the company adjourned, but Steele, Addison, D'Urfey, Prior, and Rowe, who professed to care little for play, remained behind to finish a large bowl of punch which had just made its appearance, and which they pronounced incomparably better than any that had preceded it. Coffee and liqueurs were next handed round, after which, the greater part of the guests sat down to ombre and basset, and Harley, supposing Guiscard engaged, drew Masham aside, and said to him, "I have just heard from Saint-John of the foolish meeting you intend to have with the marquis. It must not take place."

"Pardon me, Mr. Harley," replied Masham, "I see nothing to prevent it."

"*I* will prevent it," returned Harley, "and without the slightest discredit to yourself. On the contrary, you shall come off with flying colours. But you must submit yourself wholly to my guidance."

"I regret to say that I cannot comply with your request, Mr. Harley," replied Masham.

"Pshaw, sir, I tell you you must comply," cried the secretary, peremptorily, "unless you would for ever mar your fortunes. You must go with me to Abigail to-morrow."

"Must go, Mr. Harley!"

"Ay, *must*, sir, MUST," cried Harley; "you must not merely go, but throw yourself at her feet, and implore her pardon."

"And wherefore, in the name of wonder?" demanded Masham, in extremity of surprise.

"I will tell you," replied the other, smiling; "because—'Sdeath!" he exclaimed, suddenly pausing, as Guiscard stood before them.

"Your pardon, Mr. Harley, if I interrupt you," said the marquis, who, guessing what was going forward, determined to thwart the secretary's plan; "but as Mr. Masham has doubted my word, for which he will have to render me an account to-morrow, I wish him to be made aware that you are favourable to my proposed union with your fair cousin, Miss Hill."

"Confound the fellow," muttered Harley.

"You will not hesitate to give him an assurance that you are anxious to promote it," pursued Guiscard; "and that you have pledged yourself to use your best efforts with the queen for the speedy solemnization of the nuptials."

"Not exactly pledged myself, marquis," said Harley, looking at Masham.

"Surely I cannot have misunderstood you?" rejoined Guiscard, sternly.

"No, no; you have not misunderstood me, marquis," replied Harley; "but—"

"But what, sir," interrupted Guiscard, impatiently. "If it has escaped your memory, fortunately I have a memorandum to remind you."

"Oh, no, I recollect it all perfectly," said the secretary. "It is just as you say—just as you say."

This he spoke with so significant a look at Masham, that he hoped the latter would comprehend him. But the young equerry paid no attention to his glances and gestures, but bowing stiffly, walked away; and Harley, annoyed at the marquis's ill-timed interference, abruptly left him, and proceeded to one of the card tables.

At this moment, a servant entered the room, and approaching Saint-John, informed him in a low tone that two ladies desired to see him.

"Two ladies at this hour!" exclaimed Saint-John. "What the devil do they want?"

"I don't know, sir," replied the man; "but they appear in great distress, and one of them is young and very pretty."

"Ah!" exclaimed Saint-John, "that promises well. I will see them anon. Take them to the study, and send Mrs. Turnbull to them."

"I think, sir," said the man, "that the young lady's name is Angelica, and that her mother is a country parson's wife."

"What, my pretty Angelica!" cried Saint-John, transported with delight. "This is a rare piece of fortune. Show them up directly."

As the servant disappeared, Saint-John arose and communicated the intelligence he had just received to Harley and Guiscard, and all three were laughing and speculating upon the cause of the visit, when the door opened, and Mrs. Hyde and her daughter were ushered into the room. Both had handkerchiefs to their eyes, and Angelica looked as if she would sink with embarrassment at finding herself in so gay an assemblage.

"To what am I indebted for the honour of this unexpected visit, ladies?" asked Saint-John.

"Oh! dear sir!" replied Mrs. Hyde, "such a calamity as has happened! My poor, dear husband!"

"What of him?" cried Saint-John, with affected concern.

"He has been—oh!—oh!" sobbed Mrs. Hyde. "Do tell, Angelica, for I cannot."

"I can scarcely bring it out, sir," said the younger lady. "He has been ar-ar-ar—ested."

"Arrested!" echoed Saint-John, in surprise—"for what?"

"For doing nothing—nothing at all," replied Mrs. Hyde. "That's his crime."

"And a very terrible crime it is," said Saint-John, smiling. "But surely something must be laid to his charge?"

"They say it's a plot," replied Angelica — "some treasonable correspondence with French ministers. Oh dear! oh dear!"

"Treasonable correspondence with French ministers!" echoed Saint-John. "Is he a Jacobite?"

"Lord love you, no, sir,—no more than you are," replied Mrs. Hyde; "but it's all owing to Mr. Greg. Mr. Harley knows who I mean, for he's one of his clerks."

"Greg! what of him?" cried Harley, uneasily.

"Why, he has been arrested by a queen's messenger," replied Angelica, "and conveyed away to be kept in safe custody till he's examined by the privy-council to-morrow. All his papers have been seized."

Harley and Saint-John exchanged glances of ill-disguised anxiety; and Guiscard, stepping forward, said, with a look of consternation, "What is this I hear?—Greg arrested?"

"Yes, sir," replied Angelica; "and I heard the messenger say, that the papers he seized would implicate some great persons. Your name was mentioned."

"Mine!" exclaimed the marquis; "mine! Impossible! I know nothing of the fellow—that is, very little."

"This is an untoward occurrence, Harley," said Saint-John, in a low tone.

"Very untoward," replied the other; "for though I have nothing to fear, yet, as the villain was my clerk, it will give a handle to our enemies, which they will not fail to use."

"It is cursedly unlucky, indeed," cried Saint-John. "Well, my pretty Angelica," he added, "you may make yourself perfectly easy about your father—no harm will befal him. I will answer for that. But how did all this happen?"

"Why you see, sir," she replied, "a serjeant, a great tall man, with a patch upon his nose, and as ugly as sin, came with Mr. Proddy, the queen's coachman, to see Mr. Greg this evening, and was invited by him to stay supper, to which he readily agreed. Well, in the course of the evening, Mr. Greg asked the serjeant a great many questions about the Duke of Marlborough, and Mr. Proddy a great many questions about the queen, and plied them both with brandy, which soon got into their heads, and made them talk nonsense about the Revolution, and so forth. My father paid no attention to what they said, but smoked his pipe quietly by the fire, and soon fell into a doze. By and by, they spoke in whispers, and I couldn't, of course, hear what passed, but I caught the words James the Third—court of Saint Germains—and Monsieur Chamillard—which made me suspect they were talking treason."

"And you were right in the suspicion," observed Saint-John.

"What a fool Greg must be to act so unguardedly," muttered Guiscard.

"I rather think from what followed, that the serjeant and coachman were spies," pursued Angelica; "for after talking thus

for some time, they got up, and staggered off; but though the serjeant pretended to be very tipsy, I saw him look round stealthily. About half-an-hour afterwards, and just as we were going to bed, a knock was heard at the door, and Mr. Greg, who turned very pale, hesitated to open it, but as the summons was repeated, he obeyed, and a queen's messenger, as he announced himself, together with a couple of officers, rushed in, and seized him, and secured his papers, as I told you before."

"Did the messenger say who sent him?" asked Harley.

"Yes; the Duke of Marlborough," she replied; "and he declared that the duke possessed certain proofs of Mr. Greg's guilt."

Again Harley and Saint-John exchanged meaning looks, and Guiscard's countenance became darker and more troubled than ever.

"But on what plea was your father arrested?" asked Saint-John.

"Indeed, sir, I don't know," answered Angelica; "but the officers took him. He bade us not be alarmed, for he had nothing to fear, as the queen hadn't a more loyal subject than he was, and his innocence would presently appear."

"And so it will," cried Mrs. Hyde. "He's as innocent as the babe unborn. I can answer for that."

"It seems a most unjustifiable proceeding," said Saint-John, "and shall be inquired into strictly. But what brought you here, child?"

"We've done very wrong, I fear," replied Angelica, blushing, and in great confusion, "but we were quite at our wit's ends, and having no friends in London, and thinking you a pure, good-natured gentleman, we came here in the hope that you would befriend us."

"Well, I won't disappoint you," rejoined Saint-John. "And now pray take some refreshment, while I order a room to be prepared for you. I'll undertake to procure your father's liberation in the morning."

With this, he conducted them to another room, where Mrs. Turnbull soon appeared to attend upon them, and on his return entered into a close and anxious conference with Harley. Guiscard sat down to basset, but played so distractedly that he lost a considerable sum, and at last rose and took his departure. About the same time, the ladies' chairs arrived, and Mrs. Bracegirdle was escorted home by Congreve, and Mrs. Oldfield by Maynwaring. Steele and Wycherley walked after Mrs. Manley's chair, and being rather excited by what they had taken, assaulted the watch, and got lodged in Saint James's round-house. Mrs. Centlivre was attended by Prior, who called her Chloe all the way, and vowed he would write a prologue to her next play. Having finished his conference with Saint-John, Harley looked round for Masham, but could not see him, and on inquiry found he had been gone long since. Addison, Garth, and the rest, sat late,

and drank another bowl of punch, and another after that, and it was nearly four o'clock when Saint-John found himself alone.

CHAPTER THE FIFTEENTH.

TREATS OF THE SERJEANT'S EARLY BREAKFAST; AND OF THREE DUELS.

An hour before daybreak, on the morning on which his duel with Monsieur Bimbelot was to come off, Serjeant Scales arose, and as he had drunk a good deal of brandy overnight, as may have been gathered from the fair Angelica's relation, the first thing he did was to allay his thirst with a large jug of water; after which, he proceeded to attire himself, singing and whistling the while, as was his wont, but in a somewhat lower key than usual, for fear of disturbing the house. Accustomed to shave in the dark, he got through that necessary operation without accident; jumped into a pair of old jack-boots, which had been bestowed upon him by the Duke of Marlborough; threw a belt over his shoulders; experimented the temper of his sword against the floor; thrust it into the scabbard; and having put on his hat and regimental coat, marched with a tread like that of the ghost of the commandant in Don Juan, to the kitchen, with the intention of preparing himself a cup of coffee before he sallied forth. The fire was blazing cheerily as he entered, and to his surprise, he perceived Mrs. Plumpton, the buxom under-housekeeper, standing beside it.

"My gracious, serjeant!" cried Mrs. Plumpton, in affected confusion, "who would ha' thought o' seein' you? Why, you're up betimes, indeed."

"You've got the start of me, any how, Mrs. Plumpton," replied Scales. "I'm obliged to go out on duty. But you're not generally up so soon?"

"Not generally, serjeant," she replied; but I felt a little qualmish, and thinking a dish of chocolate might do me good, I got up to make it, and was just beginnin', when you came in. But, good gracious! only think! why, if I haven't got my nightcap on!"

"Never mind the nightcap, Mrs. Plumpton," rejoined the serjeant; "I'm an old soldier, you know. If you hadn't mentioned it, I shouldn't have found it out. But now I look at it, I declare it's the most becoming cap I ever saw you wear."

"La, serjeant!—but you military men are *so* polite! Wont you take a dish o' chocolate with me before you go out?"

"That I will, and thank you too, Mrs. Plumpton," replied Scales. "I was going to take coffee, but I should prefer chocolate all to nothing."

The chocolate was milled, and set upon the fire, and the buxom housekeeper was about to give it a final frothing up, when, she knew not how it was, but her waist was encircled by the gallant

serjeant's arm, and before she could utter even the slightest cry, he had imprinted half a dozen hearty kisses upon her lips. A terrible fellow was the serjeant, and as formidable in love as in war.

While this was going forward, the chocolate boiled over into the fire, and a terrible hissing, sputtering, and smoking ensued, while at the same moment a sharp, derisive laugh was heard near the door, and looking up, the disconcerted pair beheld Mrs. Tipping.

"So, this is what you get up for so early, Plumpton, eh?" cried the lady's-maid. "Pretty doings, indeed! No wonder you like the serjeant's drumming so much! But my lady shall know of it, that she shall."

"Hadn't you better tell her at the same time how often the serjeant has kissed you, Tipping," replied Mrs. Plumpton, removing the chocolate-pot from the fire. "Our meeting was quite accidental."

"Oh! quite accidental, no doubt," retorted Mrs. Tipping. "As if Mr. Timperley didn't tell you last night that the serjeant was going out at daybreak, and would want some coffee. You got up on purpose to meet him."

"Well, and pray what did you get up for?" asked Mrs. Plumpton, sharply.

"To surprise you," replied Mrs. Tipping, "and I *have* surprised you nicely. Oh! serjeant," she added, sinking into a chair, "I didn't expect this of you. To make love to an old fright like Plumpton!"

"Neither so old, nor so frightful, for that matter," rejoined the under-housekeeper, bridling up. "And the serjeant is too good a judge to think mere youth, if it has nothing else to recommend it, an attraction."

"Ladies," said Scales, "having a great regard for you both, I should like to see peace restored; and having, also, a pressing engagement on hand, you'll excuse my sitting down to breakfast."

So saying, he took a seat, and Mrs. Plumpton poured out a large cup of chocolate for him, while Mrs. Tipping, notwithstanding her displeasure, proceeded to cut slices of bread and butter, which he disposed of as fast as she could prepare them. Three cups of chocolate swallowed, and half a loaf consumed, the serjeant arose, and wiping his lips, kissed first Mrs. Plumpton, and then Mrs. Tipping, who submitted to the infliction, with a better grace than might have been expected, and quitting the house, passed through the garden, into the Green Park.

It was just getting light, and he saw seated on a bench, in the avenue of trees immediately before him, a stout little personage, in a white coat, striped waistcoat, and velvet cap with a huge neb, whom he had no difficulty in recognising as Proddy. The serjeant whistled a call, and the coachman instantly arose, and walked towards him. He had a pipe in his mouth, and a sword

under his arm, and strode with unusual dignity. After exchanging salutations, the pair shaped their course in the direction of Hyde Park. The morning was fine, but extremely cold, and the serjeant would have walked forward more briskly, but that he feared to outstrip his companion.

"I think I told you who was to be Bamby's second, didn't I, Proddy?" he observed, at length.

"One John Savage, a French corporal, who was brought over a prisoner with Marshal Tallard," replied the coachman.

"Sauvageon, not John Savage," rejoined Scales. "A brave fellow he is too. I should esteem it a greater honour to cross swords with him than with poor little Bamby."

"I tell you what, serjeant," said Proddy, "I've been thinkin' the matter over. I shan't like to stand idle, and if he has no objection, I'll take a turn with Savagejohn myself."

"Why, zounds, Proddy," cried Scales, "he'll be through you in less than no time! He's perfect master of the sword; and earns his livelihood as a fencing-master."

"I don't mind that, serjeant," said Proddy. "An Englishman is always a match for a Frenchman."

"Why, yes," replied Scales, "provided—but I'd advise you to leave the honour of your country to me."

"No, I'm resolved to fight," said Proddy. "I've brought my sword for that purpose."

"Well, if that's your humour, I'm not the man to hinder you," said Scales; "but take care of yourself, that's all. I'll help you if I can."

Whereupon, he began to hum Lillebullero, caroling forth the following snatch, with lusty lungs:—

"Hero, hero, sing the brave hero,
Victor of Blenheim and Ramilies' plains!
Marlbro' the glorious, ever victorious,
Sing him, ye Britons, in rapturous strains!"

"We're both heroes ourselves, serjeant," said Proddy, proudly. "We're goin' to fight the Mounseers, and I feel as you might have done before the battle of Blenheim."

"You're a brave little fellow, Proddy," replied Scales, clapping him on the shoulder, "and I honour you for your spirit; but you can't tell how a soldier feels before going to battle, especially when he has to fight the French. Why, on the morning of that battle, I felt like a war-horse reined in, champing and churning against the bit." And he again began to sing:—

"On the thirteenth day of August, seventeen hundred years and four,
Was a famous battle fought on the Danube's rugged shore;
Never since the Gallic legions to black Edward's might did yield,
Has their pride so low been humbled as on Blenheim's well-fought field."

"If you go on in this way, serjeant, I shall long to engage both these mounseers," said Proddy. "I'm sure my real

wocation is war. I should prefer the cartouche-box to the coach-box."

"Good!" exclaimed Scales, laughing. "Body-o-me! Proddy, how well we played our parts last night, and how completely we obfuscated that traitor Greg. What a villain the fellow must be to betray his country to its enemies. He deserves to be rammed into a cannon, and blown across the channel to Calais. But, thank Heaven, he'll meet his desert! I hope they'll be able to touch his master, Mr. Harley."

"I never meddle with state matters when I can help it, serjeant," replied Proddy, whose terrors of the preceding day were somewhat revived by the remark. "I shall be glad when Greg's hanged out of the way."

The serjeant concurring in this wish, they once more marched forward in silence.

Soon afterwards, they entered Hyde Park, the gates of which were just opened; and striking off in the direction of Kensington Gardens, kept on the higher ground, till they reached the head of a long glade bordered by a natural avenue of fine trees, chiefly elms, and sweeping down to the edge of the broad and beautiful sheet of water, which has since received the appellation of the Serpentine,—for the very excellent reason that it is as straight as a canal. Broken into lovely little dells, and shaded by clumps of timber, the ground had a secluded appearance very fitting to their purpose. About half-way down the avenue were two springs, celebrated for their virtues, to which even in those days, when hydropathy had not commenced as a practice, numbers used to resort to drink and wash, and which were protected by wooden frames. At a later period, the waters of Saint Agnes' Well—for such is the designation of the chief spring—used to be dispensed by an ancient dame, who sat beside it with a small table and glasses; while persons afflicted with ophthalmia, found relief by bathing the eyes in the sister fountain. A pump now occupies the spot, but the waters are supposed to have lost none of their efficacy. Is it not strange that in these water-drinking times the wells of Hampstead, Kilburn, and Bagnigge, should not again come into vogue?—or are their sluices dry?

The sun had just risen, and his beams glanced through the branches of the tall and spreading trees, sparkled upon the surface of the distant water, which glistened like silver, and shone with diamond lustre on the dewy sod. Well may we be proud of Hyde Park, for no capital but our own can boast aught like it. The sylvan and sequestered character of the scene was wholly undisturbed, and but for the actual knowledge of the fact, no one would have dreamed that the metropolis was within a mile's distance. Screened by the trees, the mighty city was completely hidden from view, while on the Kensington road, visible through the glade which looked towards the south-west, not a house was to be seen. To add to the secluded character of

The Double Duel.

LONDON: JOHN MORTIMER, ADELAIDE STREET, 1844.

the place, a herd of noble red-deer were couching beneath an oak, that crowned a gentle acclivity on the right, and a flock of rooks were cawing loudly on the summits of the high trees near Kensington Gardens.

"Well, we're first in the field at all events, Proddy," said Scales, halting. "This is the place of rendezvous."

"I'm glad of it," replied the coachman, taking off his wig and cap, and mopping up the moisture that was streaming down his puffy cheeks; "you walked a little too fast for me."

"Why didn't you say so?" rejoined the serjeant. "But we're not much too soon, for here they come."

Hastily replacing his wig and cap, Proddy turned to regard the new comers. Little Monsieur Bimbelot appeared to be dressed with extraordinary care, and wore a velvet coat, a brocade waistcoat, and a full, flowing peruke. He was attended by a middle-aged man, almost as tall as the serjeant himself, with a weasen, hatchet face, a tremendously long, hooked nose, a sharp chin, and a beard as blue as that of the great Wife-Killer of the fairy tale, and which, together with his nose, formed what is vulgarly termed a pair of nut-crackers. Then he had a long, scraggy neck, with the pomum Adami largely developed, black, bristling brows, and great, staring black eyes, that shot forth terrible glances. He was wrapped in a loose white regimental coat, from beneath which the point of a sword, and a pair of brown leathern gaiters appeared. His hat was cocked very fiercely, and his wig was terminated by an immense queue. Altogether, the appearance of the corporal seemed to justify the opinion pronounced by Scales as to his prowess.

Drawing himself up to his full height, the serjeant awaited the advance of his opponent, while Proddy emulated his example, and by way of giving himself additional altitude, sprang upon a mole-hill, and stood on tiptoe as long as he could.

"Messieurs," said Bimbelot, tripping nimbly forward, and taking off his hat, "j'ai l'honneur de vous presenter mon ami, Achille De L'Epée Sauvageon, feu Caporal à sa majesté Louis le Grand, mais à present prisonnier de la guerre en Angleterre."

"What does all that mean?" cried Proddy.

"Silence!" said Scales, sternly. "Corporal, your servant," he added, taking off his hat to Sauvageon.

"Le votre, monsieur le sergent," replied the other, returning the salute.

"And now, gentlemen to business," cried Scales. "I'll be ready for you in a twinkling, Bamby," he added, taking off his coat.

"I sall not detain you long, sergent," replied Bimbelot, likewise divesting himself of his upper garment.

The corporal then advanced to his principal, and delivered him his sword, adding a few words in an under tone, during which Proddy addressed Scales.

"I say, serjeant, if you wont tell Savagejohn I want to fight him, I'll do it myself," he said.

"You had better not," replied Scales. "At all events not till I've done."

"But I don't like to wait," rejoined the valorous coachman. "I say, Corporal Achilles Savagejohn," he added, in a loud voice, "since our friends are goin' to set to, we may as well have a bout together as stand idle."

"Avec beaucoup de plaisir, mon gros tonneau," replied the corporal, grinning.

"What does he say?" asked Proddy.

"Mocks you, that's all," replied Scales.

"Does he!" cried Proddy, furiously. "Odsbodikins! I'll make him laugh on the wrong side of his ugly mouth. Mocks me—ha! Hark'ee, you spindle-shanked, black-muzzled colossus—you half-starved may-pole, who look as if you had fed all your days upon nothing but frogs and cheese-parings—draw and defend yourself, I say, or I'll slit your scraggy weasand for you. Do you understand that?"

"Parfaitement, monsieur," replied the corporal, his teeth chattering with rage. "You are too full of good liquor, mon petit brave. If I don't spill some of your claret, may I never wield sword again."

"Since you needs must fight, Proddy," said the serjeant, in a low tone to him, "mind what I say. As your adversary is much taller than you, come to half sword as soon as you can."

"Half sword!" exclaimed Proddy. "What's that? I've got a whole sword, and a good long one, too. Look at it."

"Why, zounds and the devil!" exclaimed Scales. "Are you going to fight without any knowledge of the art of fence?"

"To be sure I am," replied Proddy.

"You'll be killed as sure as a gun. However, since there's no help for it, get as near the corporal as you can, and when he thrusts at you, don't attempt to parry—you understand that—but thrust again, and ten to one but you may hit him. It will be *contre-tente*, as he would say, but no matter, if you succeed. It's your only chance."

"I'll do it," replied Proddy, resolutely.

The serjeant then stepped aside a few paces, to select an open spot, and was followed by Bimbelot. They were about to take up a position, when the polite valet remarking Scales' equipments, said, "Mais ces bottes, sergent. Wont you take dem off? You'll find dem ver inconvenient."

"Not in the least, Bamby, I'm obliged to you," replied Scales. "These boots once belonged to the Duke of Marlborough," he added, proudly; "I always wear them upon great occasions like the present."

"Ah—yes—I understand," replied Bimbelot, flattered by the implied compliment. "As you please den. Commencons."

Swords were then drawn, appeals beaten, salutes made, and both stood upon guard; but before beginning the assault, the serjeant could not help glancing in the direction of Proddy, for whose safety he felt much uneasiness. He saw the poor coachman standing opposite his fierce antagonist, who now looked doubly formidable, and putting himself in guard in tierce, in imitation of the others whom he had watched, while with his left hand he was trying to take off his cap gracefully. All this Scales saw in a glance, and he then turned his attention to his own opponent, who made a thrust at him in carte, which he instantly parried, with a reposte in seconde. Though anxious on Proddy's account to terminate the fight as speedily as possible, Scales found it no such easy matter, for Bimbelot was a very skilful fencer, and pass after pass was exchanged without any decided advantage being obtained. At last, as the valet made a thrust in carte, Scales parried quickly in prime, and immediately passed his right arm swiftly over the forte of his adversary's blade, and presenting his own point at the same time, disarmed him.

Without bestowing further thought on his discomfited adversary, whom he left in an attitude of ludicrous despair, the serjeant dashed with a sword in either hand, to the assistance of Proddy. He was just in time. Vainly had the valiant coachman essayed to make a thrust at his skilful opponent, and he had only avoided the other's desperate lounges by springing back whenever a pass was made at him. Vainly, also, had the corporal, as he pushed him on, called upon him, with furious oaths, to confess himself vanquished. Proddy would not yield, and though much longer defence seemed hopeless, he still held out. Thrust after thrust did the corporal make at him, and leap after leap did he give, when just as his adversary's blade was within an inch of his breast, and he winced at the idea of feeling its horrid point in his flesh, he heard the cheering voice of the serjeant. Upon this, he gave a convulsive spring backwards, and in the effort fell, while his sword flew out of his hands to a couple of yards distance.

Seeing this, Scales hurried forward as quickly as his heavy jack boots would allow, and before the corporal could improve his advantage, dashed between him and his prostrate foe. Sauvageon, with a loud oath, made a thrust at him; but the serjeant parried in prime, and beating the feeble of his adversary's blade smartly and strongly with the forte of his own, sent the sword whizzing aloft.

"Ah! sacre bleu! dat I should be beat in dis way," cried Sauvageon, grinning with rage.

"Pick up your sword again, if you are dissatisfied, corporal," said Scales, magnanimously, "and we'll have another bout."

"Ah, non, vous estes le diable, sergent," replied the corporal; "but you must admit dat I fairly conquer de little cosheman."

"It's false, Savagejohn!" cried Proddy, who by this time had got upon his feet, and regained possession of his sword. "I've never yielded, and never meant to yield. And if you say so, I'll run you through the body."

And as he spoke, he ran at the unarmed Frenchman, who seeing him advance in this truculent fashion, with slaughter painted in his countenance, was fain to take to his heels and fly. In vain Scales, who could scarcely speak for laughing, called him back. Heedless of his shouts, Proddy pursued the flying corporal with a velocity which the desire of vengeance alone could inspire, and which was wonderful in a person of his bulk, and contrived to prick him twice or thrice with the point of his sword behind, when his foot, catching in the root of a tree, he was once more stretched upon the ground. But though he fell, the corporal did not stop, but fancying his blood thirsty foe still at his heels, ran blindly and furiously on, till coming in contact with the wooden framework round Saint Agnes' well, which he had not remarked in his haste, he was precipitated head foremost into the water.

Meanwhile, the victorious serjeant having sheathed his sword, beckoned Bimbelot to him, and complimenting him upon his conduct in the affair, they shook hands very cordially. A few minutes afterwards, Proddy joined them, but was unable to speak for some time, the breath being completely knocked out of him by the last fall; and ere long, the corporal came up, with his wig plastered to his face, his clothes drenched, and presenting altogether a strong resemblance to a drowned rat. He was very angry with Proddy, whom he accused of taking a cowardly and dishonourable advantage of him, and expressed great anxiety to renew the fight. Nor was the coachman anything loth, so that it required all the efforts of the serjeant and Bimbelot, to restore peace, which being at last effected, the disputants shook hands, and so warmed towards each other, that in less than five minutes, they embraced, and swore an eternal friendship.

Bimbelot, who really was a very good-natured little fellow, asked the whole party to breakfast, and they were just walking off, when, as if struck by sudden thought, he halted, and cried aloud, "Ah! I just recollect. Stupid dat I was to forget. My master has an affair of honour on his hands dis morning, and hereabouts. Let us go see for him. Our assistance may be needed."

"Who is your master going to fight, Bamby?" asked the serjeant.

"Le jeune Masham," replied Bimbelot; "de young equerry who pretend to de hand of Mademoiselle Hill."

Scales appeared to reflect upon the information and the party commenced their search, shaping their course in a north-westerly direction. They had not proceeded far, when, guided by the clash of steel, they perceived, in a hollow among the trees, five persons,

two of whom were stripped to the shirt, and engaged in conflict, while their companions stood at a little distance from them.

"Ah! voila mon maitre!" exclaimed Bimbelot, halting with the others under the shelter of a tree at the edge of the hollow, where they could see what was passing without being noticed.

The two principals in the conflict, as had been rightly conjectured, were Guiscard and Masham, and the seconds Saint-John and Maynwaring. The fifth person was a surgeon, with a case of instruments under his arm. The combatants were extremely well matched, and the rapidity and skill with which the various thrusts were made and parried, elicited the applause of the serjeant.

"How beautifully that quinte-thrust was parried by Mr. Masham, Bamby," he cried. "Did you see how he held his wrist in high-carte, with a low point, and put by his adversary's point, by opposing the forte of his outside edge."

"Vraiment, c'est bon," replied Bimbelot—"mais voyez avec quelle addresse mon maitre forme la parade d'octave."

"But see," cried the serjeant, "Mr. Masham makes the cavé, and reversing his edge from the inside to the outside, throws off the thrust. And look — look!—the marquis makes a pass in carte over the arm—Mr. Masham parries, and quickly returns in seconde, thrusting and opposing an outward edge. Ah, that pass has told—his point enters his adversary's breast."

As the last pass was delivered, the whole party ran down the side of the dell, but before they reached the bottom, the marquis had fallen to the ground. Bimbelot immediately went up to him, and the shirt being opened, the wound was examined by the surgeon, who pronounced that it was not dangerous, the sword having glanced across the ribs under the arm. The pain of the wound, and the effusion that ensued, had caused faintness, but restoratives being applied, by the aid of Bimbelot and the serjeant, he was conveyed to a chair, which was in waiting at a little distance among the trees.

"You have behaved like a man of honour, Masham," said Saint-John, at the close of the combat. "You and Maynwaring must come and breakfast with me, and afterwards I will go with you to Harley. You were perfectly right about Abigail, though I couldn't tell you so before. She detests Guiscard, and I think has a tenderness for you."

"In that case I have not fought in vain," replied Masham, sheathing his sword.

A DEMON'S MIRROR.

BY CHARLES W. BROOKS.

FATIGUED with waltzing, yet desirous to give philosophy a turn, Adolph left the brilliant saloon of the Baron von Neuburg, and wandered down the wild and spacious gardens, with his hands behind him and the Rhine before him. Alternately apostrophizing the stars, and anathematizing the steep descent of the path, Adolph von Rosenheim reached the bank of the stream. It was a lovely summer night, more fit for dreaming than for dancing, but then the roads to the castle were so bad in other weather, that the ladies of the neighbourhood had agreed to compound for the certainty of not sticking in their way by taking the chance of fainting in the waltz. The ladies were right; there is some romance in a swoon, but none in a slough, except the Slough of Despond, into which indeed many romances bring us.

As he arrived at the river, his walk and his wrath ended together, and ere he had watched the bright waters, leaping in the moonlight, for many minutes, he had returned to the conviction that the world, though full of woes, is, upon the whole, worth living in. He thus afforded a proof of the advantage of educating the eye of youth. Had Adolph never been taught to recognise the picturesque, he might, laden with dissatisfactions, have thrown himself into the river—as it was, he only threw himself down beside it.

I use that phrase merely out of regard to the etiquette of story-telling, for in truth Adolph did nothing of the kind. He was exceedingly well dressed, and knew it perfectly well, and so far from offering violence to his faultless costume, he carefully took a seat upon a little rocky hillock, which he previously covered with his pocket-handkerchief. If ladies and gentlemen really dashed and flung and tumbled themselves about as stated in several novels, they would look slovenly and slatternly long before the end of the second volume.

Adolph, then, sat and gazed upon the Rhine. He had come out to philosophize, and he meditated upon a certain beautiful Bertha von Herold, from whom he had just parted in the saloon. He reviewed with accuracy, yet with some leaning in his own favour, her conduct to him during the evening. Divers things, as we have said, dissatisfied him. The chief of these was her being engaged when he first solicited her hand. He had, it was true, arrived very late; but still he was dissatisfied. And, moreover, she had since waltzed several miles with him; nay, had given him some violets, and yet the unreasonable philosopher was dissatisfied. In love affairs, these philosophers know too much and too little. It is good to be quite blindfold when you play that game—your head is quite as safe, and your fun is much greater. But Adolph was not pleased, and still he gazed upon the sparkling waters.

"Could one but know what a woman is," muttered Adolph, with less reasonableness than one would have expected from a young gentleman who had glided, covered with university honours, into the position of secretary to a minister. Thesis and protocol had it seems taught him insufficiently.

A silvery, but passionless voice, answered the philosopher. It was

a voice whose words fell like the plash of a gentle fountain, distinct, but without emphasis. Yet it spoke in music, and its perfect articulation proved that the singer had never been educated at the R.A.M. And this was—

The Song of the Rhine Nymph.

O'er the waste of waters floating,
I have sigh'd through countless years,
From my couch of crystal noting
Life's vain joys and vainer tears.
Mourners, whom bright stars are leading
By the wave to wander lone,
Oft, my hoarded sorrows heeding,
Half forget to weep their own.

Thou, whose love yon maid returning,
Warmly meets with voice and eyes,
Yet for deeper proof art burning,
Claim and clasp thy priceless prize.
Yield to chains thy Fate is weaving,
Yield—nor seek their links to prove;
Lip from lip the vow receiving,
Faith should ask no more from Love.

And as the singer paused, she smiled—a sweet smile; but cold beyond the coldness of the lip of the statue which has smiled away a thousand generations. Adolph looked in wonder upon the form which floated in the stream. A being, lovely as woman, but which he felt it would be impious to call woman, was before him. A face of exquisite regularity, but intense in its melancholy, was surrounded by a mass of golden hair which fell over shoulders and a bosom whiter than those of mortal. The symmetry of that bust was perfect, as was that of the waist round which the waters lingered, claspingly, fit wooers for such a form. One rounded arm with its transparent hand was holding back the clustering tresses, the other hand bore a small mirror, set in silver—it might have been the toy of a maiden who had gone down, with some foundering bark, to the ocean deeps. Adolph gazed for one moment in admiring wonder, which the next turned to a shudder. A breeze had driven the ripples from the breast of the songstress. It was but for an instant, but that instant shewed Adolph that a monster was before him, and not the work of Him who created humanity in his own image.

The Mermaid approached. For it was indeed one of those dreadful beings, framed by the exulting fiends in impious mockery while the waters of the deluge lay upon the earth, the bodies of whose expiring daughters were desecrated to aid in the unholy union of humanity with the lower creation. Adolph would have risen to flee; but the surpassing loveliness of the fearful object before him enchained eye and limb. He remained without motion, and that passionless voice spoke.

"Adolph von Rosenheim seeks the truth. Let him take this mirror, discover the truth, and be wretched." And with another melancholy smile the being, extending its arm, laid the glass upon his hand. It thrilled him to the bone as if it had been of white-hot steel. Glancing at it for an instant, he again raised his eyes. He was alone, but he imagined that he heard a wailing and gradually diminishing sound, which formed itself into the words—

"Yield—nor seek their links to prove."

The sound, if sound there were, then ceased.

The philosopher sat, as if stupified, for some time, when a human and familiar voice addressed him. It was that of Carl Osten, formerly his fellow-student at Halle, now his most intimate friend. But at that moment the sound even of an enemy's voice would have been welcome.

"Adolph! Yes, by all the divinities in and out of the saloon, by the goddesses in the skies and the goddesses in the satins. Why, man, we have been in consternation on your behalf. Most of us supposed you had been spirited away, and the baroness, who avers that she saw you mixing water with your hock, declares that she suspects you are a river demon in disguise."

Adolph shuddered.

"Pray," continued his friend, "do something in one or other of your characters, and return to the waltz, or to the water."

"I was heated and tired," said Adolph.

"Heated and tired, and Bertha von Herold in the room? *Credat Judæus Apella, non Carl.* You have had a quarrel with her. Is it so? Heaven, Adolph! how you start and glare. Are you wild?"

He might well ask the question. As Adolph rose, the mermaid's mirror had turned towards the bosom of Carl. Glancing at its surface, Adolph *read the heart of his friend*—read words which Carl had died ere he had dared to utter. They were words of love, and jealousy, and hope that kindled, as the idea of a difference having arisen betwen Bertha and Adolph crossed the mind of Carl. In the desperation which we too often mistake for a fate, Adolph asked, hurriedly—

"You, too, Carl,—you love Bertha, do you not?"

The lips of Carl attempted a denying smile; but there, in the fatal glass, was the heart, glowing with passion and hate, and even a thought of murder was present for an instant. With a violent effort, Adolph dashed Carl away; he staggered, and fell into the stream. Adolph looked but once; but as the rapid tide bore away the struggling Carl to death, his face became that of the fearful mermaid. The slayer rushed to the house, bearing with him the demon's glass.

He entered the splendid saloon, and was again amid light, music, and perfumes. Smiles and gentle glances greeted him, but he scowled in return, even when the bright forehead of Bertha glowed at his approach. He felt the mirror as a dreadful and clinging weight, yet he longed to try its efficacy here.

Several acquaintances addressed him; a poet, who had published his rhymes solely at the request of his (he feared) too partial friends; a placeman, who had thrown off a showy political pamphlet, merely lest its subject should not receive due attention from the legislature; a husband, with Petruchio's words in his mouth, and his wife's clogs in his pocket; a minister's secretary needed no glass como from the fiend, to read those transparencies. But, tremblingly, he advanced to Bertha; on her, he had resolved to make his mad experiment. As he drew near, he gazed upon her beauty, then radiant with pleasure and excitement, as upon a loved thing he beheld for the last time.

Adolph placed himself on a couch, by her side; she spoke to him in low love tones, and he listened until he half repented of his distrust. Yet, hardening his spirit, he drew forth the infernal mirror, and, unseen by the beautiful girl, he turned its polished face upon her. She

continued to whisper low; and he led her to speak of their last interview in her own little garden. She spoke of the bright dreams he had then summoned around her—of the wild and noble imaginations he had laid open before her. Gradually, her words toned down to the lower and sweeter voice of affection—she whispered of the dwelling they had marked for their own, when Adolph should have added one more to the honours he was earning, of the happy home which they would make their Eden, of the cheerful hearth over which they would sit in the winter evenings.

His eye dropped upon the accursed glass, the heart spoke—

"*And often Carl Osten shall have a seat there with you, and more often without you.*"

"Merciful God!" cried Adolph, "is it to be always thus. I have sought a gift which will render my life one long agony. I should have contented myself with trying the hearts of those I hate, or despise; I am now doomed to read what I would have given a world not to know. Oh! that I had been satisfied to love and to believe!"

He would have dashed the glass to the earth, but it clung to his hand, as though a part of his frame; and his frenzied rage availed him nothing, the accusing witness resisted every effort. Henceforth, life was to be a hollowness and a mockery.

"Have I no means," he gasped frantically out, "to render the mirror harmless?"

"If it were mine," said a loud, laughing voice at his ear, "I should rub off the quicksilver from the back;" and a hand upon his shoulder somewhat roughly assisted to scatter his slumbers.

"*You*, Carl!" he exclaimed, with a glance at the river, "and Bertha, too, have you come for me. What must you think of me?" he added, taking the unresisting hand of the bright-eyed girl.

"I don't mean ever to think of you again," said Bertha. "Tell me what you have been dreaming about."

"Not for worlds, dearest," said Adolph, as he led her towards the saloon.

Oh, then he had been asleep by the side of the river all the time. That's such a very old way of managing a story—why, I have read a hundred dream tales. There was one by Dr. Maginn, in an annual, and there was Victorine, which we saw at the Adelphi—Mrs. Yates waking up in a hurry, and putting both her shoes on the same foot, you know, and there was——

Perfectly true; and if we had supposed that you would be deceived for a moment, we should at once have explained that Adolph had dropped asleep, and that his dream was only a dream, and might be called Bottom's dream, for that gentleman's own exquisite reason—because it had no bottom. We are above mystification, by no means considering it in good taste. But we may as well add, that though the reflections which Adolph saw in the mermaid's glass were false ones, he was wise enough to take one other reflection from it; and as his bearing that reflection in mind materially increased the married happiness of the Von Rosenheims, we shall offer it for the benefit of every other Adolph and Bertha.

"WHEN YOU ARE TEMPTED TO HOLD THE MIRROR TOO NEAR TO THE HEARTS OF THOSE YOU WISH TO LOVE, RUB OFF THE QUICKSILVER."

THE EUPHRATES EXPEDITION.

BY W. FRANCIS AINSWORTH.

THE idea of opening a steam communication between Great Britain and India, by means of the river Euphrates, was a thing of its time. The curiosity and interest attached to unexplored districts, the associations connected with which, belonged to the most remote antiquity, were not enough to lend to it a charm beyond that of the moment. It was an enterprise fraught with novelty and adventures, but the public was not made familiar with these. It offered a comparatively safe and secure means of visiting existing towns, as well as sites and monuments of antiquity, which the predatory habits of the semi-savage tribes, dwellers in the wilderness, had rendered hitherto almost unapproachable; but the existence of the greater part of these were unknown, or only surmised, and the chief among them in name—Babylon, "the glory of kingdoms, and the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency," and Nineveh—

> ———"of length within her walls
> Several days' journey, built by Ninus old,
> Of that first golden monarchy the seat,"—

were only looked upon as vast extents of broken mounds amid a dreary waste—so many great graves of giant dimensions.

The ancient Assyrian and Chaldean monarchies had arisen upon the long vales of the Euphrates, and its arrowy sister—the Tigris; Persian and Macedonian dynasties had succeeded upon their demolition; Judaism had lived there in bondage, and prophets had dwelt in the same countries. They had been at once the scene of Greek and Roman triumphs, and had witnessed the severest disasters which befel these dominating nations of antiquity. Mohammedanism had attained there its zenith of civilization, and upheld the arts and sciences, when almost extinguished elsewhere; but scarcely a trace was supposed to remain of these bygone epochs, and the former existence of days of martial glory, and prosperous enlightenment, only served with many to render existing desolation more repulsive, and the prostration of the actual inhabitants more palpable and more hopeless.

The banks of both rivers, and the great plains adjoining them, were crowded with monuments, speaking eloquently of the manners and customs of the people, and of the construction and demolition of the great monarchies of antiquity. The colossal brick mounds and lofty towers of Chaldea and Babylonia, represent almost as distinctly the characters of those who raised them, as the embattled citadel does Roman skill; marble dwelling-houses—each a palace within itself, Zenobia's taste and elegance; rich tracery and profusion of ornament, Saracenic imagination; and stern monasteries and rock dwellings, the austerity and sufferings of an early Christianity. Each and all have their representatives on the banks of the Euphrates and Tigris; where are to be seen remains of Israelitic colonies by the side of wide extending Assyrian ruins, desolate as the wilderness; of Grecian art entombed in Roman castles and citadels; of Persian palaces and arches, rising out of the plain; of Zenobia's fair residences, sculptured from

the rock; of Saracenic forts, palaces, mosques and tombs, in the deep river bays, glittering from amid evergreen palm forests; of paintings of the times of the Crusaders decorating the halls of the castles of Birtha and Edessa; and of many more mixed and incongruous monuments belonging often to a little known, and an almost mysterious antiquity.

Many could afford to sneer at what they termed "Hindoo diamond-seeking"—the effort to unravel what belonged of history and reality to these gems of the wilderness. Happily, however, there were not wanting minds who could also afford sympathy for such remains of ancient time, and who had not cast off those deep and tender instincts of our nature, which are roused on contemplating ruins, not venerable merely from the number of years which they have survived, but from the times and ages which they represent—the tale they tell of manners and customs long since gone by—of beings, whose very dust is dispersed before the winds; whose history is but faintly shadowed forth in all that remains of the traditions, legends, or historical records of the periods in which they lived, and who are for once, and for the last time, brought almost in contact with us, when we tread the same precincts which they occupied, and explore those now ruinous edifices which witnessed the great drama of life of a long departed age and people.

Several millions of roving pastoral and agricultural beings were awaiting the slow-spreading advantages of civilization. At home it was proclaimed, "we are men, and nothing belonging to man is alien to us:" "the good work is prospering everywhere." And new means and resources flowed in from the appeal; but the Mohammedan did not come within the sphere of hope; and the chief remnant of the long lost Chaldean nation, was sought out in its mountain fastnesses—its primitive worship hitherto unpolluted by the hand of time, and its independence so long ensured by providence, only to be allowed immediately afterwards, to be for the first time overrun and almost annihilated by the fierce fanaticism of an opposing faith.

There was a new market, and an extensive one, opened for the goods and manufactures of this country; but even this failed to rouse the cupidity of the trader. There were political advantages in having moral power upon these great and navigable rivers, and their first occupation held out latent prospects of a powerful sway in the future and untold destinies of the East; yet, the navigation of the Euphrates has been, even by those interested in these great questions, allowed to remain as a mere page in the history of travel and adventure.

It was this absence of all interest in the progress of the enterprise, and the almost general apathy as to its success or failure, added to the opposition of those who were wedded to another line of route, which first led to lukewarmness on the part of his Majesty's government; and the unexpected and shameful opposition made by the local authorities to the landing of the expedition; the detention of camels, cattle, and means of transport from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates; the time requisite for the execution of the various projects of science connected with the expedition; the difficulties, accidents, and interruptions of a first navigation, and the loss of the smaller of the two vessels which constituted the force of the expedition, and which was alone adapted for an ascent of the river at all seasons; above all, the additional

outlay, caused by these various delays, finally led to the government withdrawing all support from the undertaking.

But, notwithstanding a notion which has become very prevalent from these untoward circumstances, among a class of persons who consider themselves very hard thinkers and very practical men, that the river Euphrates is not to be navigated—in fact, that it is unlike all other great rivers, and, probably in virtue of an Arab legend to that effect—not to be subdued by the skill and science of man; enough has been done to testify to the contrary, and to shew how great a want of real spirit and energy there is in such a detraction of the capabilities of the "Great River" of Scripture *par excellence*, and that a more extensive and more promising field for steam-navigation, intercommunication, and commerce, has not been opened since the days when the great rivers of the new world were first explored.

His Majesty's steamer Euphrates navigated the immortal stream whose name it bore, from Bireh-jik downwards to the embouchure of the united rivers Euphrates and Tigris, in the Persian Gulf, a distance of one thousand one hundred and ninety-seven miles; and the same steamer ascended the river Tigris upwards of five hundred and fifty miles, and the river Euphrates to a still greater distance from the junction of the two streams, previous to the breaking up of the enterprise.

Since that period, in the year 1841, the Honourable the East India Company's steamers Nimrod and Nitocris made a successful ascent of the same river, to that point (Ba'lis), which was deemed the best and the nearest for communication with the Mediterranean; having accomplished a journey of eleven hundred and thirty miles in nineteen days and a half, without any casualty whatever. The river Tigris was also ascended to upwards of eight hundred miles, from where it empties itself into the Euphrates; and, as if to leave nothing undone and unproven, a steamer was actually taken across the plain of Babylon, from the one river to the other, by one of those numerous canals which, belonging to the most remote antiquity, intersect that plain like a great net-work, facilitating in ancient times the intercourse of peace and commerce, and at the same time arming the despair of the Assyrians with the means of opposing a sudden deluge to the progress of an invading army.

Several tributaries to the same great rivers as the Habor of Scripture, and more especially the Karun, the great river of "Shusan the palace"—

"The drink of none but kings,"

were ascended to greater or less distances, in some cases amounting to several hundreds of miles from where they had disembogued into the Euphrates or Tigris; and it was more especially determined that the river Euphrates itself, in no part of its course from its mouth to the station most proximate to the Mediterranean, presents any difficulties which are greater than what are met with in many parts of the Thames, the Seine, the Danube, and other rivers daily navigated by steam-boats.

The progress of events in the East, the disastrous campaign in Affghanistan, breaking for a while the spirit of enlarged enterprise, the necessity for securing more permanently the great natural frontier

of our Indian possessions—the river Indus—the accession to power in Hindostan of one who had been all along opposed to the objects of the expedition, and not improbably the interference of a great rival power in the East, finally broke up the whole undertaking, only for a short time supported by the home-government, and in an almost equally brief space of time abandoned by that of India, and the steam flat upon the Euphrates was finally withdrawn to a different field of employment.

Justice may yet be done to the amount of labour executed, to the explorations effected, and to the contributions made to science and general knowledge by this expedition, as well as to the endurance and perseverance of those who were engaged in it, by its commanding officer, who has been some time occupied in an extensive work upon the subject.

"Long it were to tell
What they have done, what suffer'd, with what pain
Travell'd!"

But in the meantime, as the author has already furnished a few sketches of the ruins and countries explored by the expedition, and of the adventures which befel it, he proposes for the future to continue these more in the form of a narrative, and thus give to them the interest of an orderly and progressive arrangement.

THE DEATH OF THE PAUPER PEASANT.*

BY CAMILLA TOULMIN.

"Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—
A breath can make them, as a breath has made;
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroy'd, can never be supplied."
GOLDSMITH.

'NEATH the summer's sun, and the winter's snow,
Through youth and manhood's time,
He won by the toil that furrow'd his brow,
Deep in his early prime,
The homely food, and the garments rude,
And shelter from wind and weather;
Up—up with the sun, his work was begun
Ere the birds sprung from the heather.
Plough—sow—delve away,
The harder the work, the less the pay;
Do we not know
The world goes so?

But the shelter that kept out weather and winds,
Had the magical name of Home;
A word that is dearer to English minds
Than palace or lordly dome.
There were garments rude, and homely food,
For a little loving band;
And a wife was there, once young and fair,
To clasp the horny hand,

* See case reported in the TIMES, Dec. 1843.

And bless it—through God—that its strength could give,
Not store for old age—but the means to live!
For the poor have hearts—and 'tis thought they know,
A feeling of joy from one of woe.

Old Age—*he* hath pass'd by years the span
That the Psalmist, we know, "measured out to man,"
And Fortune, the blind, for him doth rehearse
The mournful and terrible Roman curse.
His children have grown greyheaded—and died,
Why doth he not lie in the grave beside?
For England is bleak to the poor and old,
She knoweth no worth but the worth of gold;
She doth not attempt to understand
The noble labour of head or hand;
Her soul must be dead, if it never mounts
To a Heaven beyond "red-lined accounts!"

And the horny hand is feeble now,
And the full bright eye is dim;
And his scanty hairs are white as snow,
And he totters in every limb.
Yet may it not be, that memory
Lives through the wreck of years?
Does he call on Death, with that gasping breath,
And the fast descending tears?
Oh! the world is cold
To the poor and old,
For he cannot work, and he doth not steal,
And only the poor for him can feel!

'Tis Poverty gaunt the shelter gives,
And a homely couch spreads there;
Though she can no more, and only lives
Herself on the scantiest fare.
But she *hath* kind words, that wake the chords
Of grateful tenderness!
Oh, spoils the least, of the wealthy's feast,
Would soothe the hours' distress!
But the Law says, "No,
It must *not* be so;
Away from the scene that mirrors Home—
Away, to the parish workhouse come!"

Life's sands are ebbing few and fast;
Thank God, he hardly knows at last,
The meaning of the words they say!
"Up—up, Old Man! come—come away,
Though cold and wet December's day!"
But harsher than the melting sky
The hearts that turn him forth—to die.

A pauper dies—what matter where?
Or how he lives, they little care.
Is Poverty so deep a crime?
Bears it the brand—the serpent's slime,
So plainly marked, that by its side
Seems fair the selfish heart of Pride?
That Idleness and Luxury
Are worthier held than Poverty?
No! Honour to the stalwart hand,
And honour to the labouring band!
And though the Pauper's winding sheet
Is all Old England now can mete
To him who till'd her fruitful soil,
Till Age forbade the hand to toil;
Deep in the heart such things shall sink—
Deep in the hearts that feel and think,
Until Opinion's mighty sway
Shall wipe the Nation's stain away!

THE NUN AND THE ACTOR.

BY MISS SKELTON.

RETURNING from rehearsal one morning, not many years ago, the handsome actor, Francesco F——, was startled, while passing along the crowded streets of Milan, by being suddenly accosted by a nun. The nun was clad in the costume of a lay sister, and closely veiled. She did not speak, but touched the actor's arm.

The instant that she had succeeded in attracting his attention, she slipped a note into his hand, and passed on.

It was the transaction of a second; remarked by none save himself. The figure of the nun was soon lost among the busy crowds around him. He quickened his pace; but waited until he had entered a quieter part of the town, ere he read the billet. These were the contents:—

"Be at the garden entrance of the Convent of our Lady of Grace, to-night, at the hour of nine. Come alone, and *fear nothing*."

That night there was no performance at the theatre: this, doubtless, the writer knew. The actor was a man of *bonnes fortunes:* he looked upon this as another proof of the interest he could excite among the fair sex; but an appointment made by a nun, and in all probability with one, had something of unusual interest to recommend it to his prompt attention—at least, so thought the handsome actor; and he awaited with some impatience the hour named in the billet.

The result of long experience in these affairs actuated him to destroy the note, after having fixed the contents in his mind. He remained in his lodgings the rest of the day; then, half-an-hour before the time named, wrapped in his cloak, and dressed with peculiar care, he sallied forth, and, avoiding the public ways, passed hastily through the bye-streets, until he entered the suburb, at the far extremity of which stands the Convent of our Lady of Grace.

Just as the great bell tolled nine—every clock and steeple in the town answering or taking up the deep, booming sounds,—just as the bell tolled nine—and not until then, although for many minutes previous had he been at the place of appointment—did the garden entrance slowly open to admit the expectant actor.

The figure that, in the fading light, was visible to him on the threshold of the entrance, was apparently that of the nun that had accosted him in the morning: at least, height and garb were the same. The figure beckoned him to follow, and moving quickly, led him across the gloomy garden into the building of the convent.

The nun had brought no lamp; and, as they came within the shadow of the high, frowning walls, to the door that led into a narrow, dark passage, the actor hesitated.

The door was open; probably left in that state by his conductress. The narrow passage was indeed dark. Upon the threshold he hesitated. His conductress perceived this; she grasped his hand and led him forward, pausing but to fasten the door. As the slight fingers

closed upon his own, he thought he felt them tremble. From the dark passage they entered a small room, lighted by the brilliant light of two waxen tapers, burning upon a rude shrine, which supported a marble crucifix. Dazzled by the sudden transition from gloom to light, the actor did not perceive that his companion had quitted him as soon as she had ushered him within. She was gone, and he was alone within the small room.

He threw off his heavy cloak, and traversing the narrow bounds, examined the apartment and its furniture: both were poor indeed. Nothing could exceed the simplicity of the bare whitewashed walls—the uncurtained window—the uncarpeted floor—the two rude chairs—the rough table, on which, however, was placed a flask containing wine—the shrine, whose coarse construction contrasted strangely with the delicate workmanship of the costly crucifix it supported, whose rich carving was made manifest by the brilliant light of the waxen tapers burning on the altar.

Besides the door at which he had entered, there was another, which he had conjectured would lead into the sleeping chamber, doubtless connected with this poor apartment. While gazing at the costly crucifix, he heard this door open; turning, a form glided into his presence, whose unlooked-for appearance sent all the hot blood rushing back upon his heart, leaving his cheek and quivering lips white as ashes.

She that entered was not less pale; but there was no surprise upon that beautiful face; only the evidences of some suppressed emotion—just visible in the dark, tear-laden eyes.

The actor, his first astonishment being over, sprang forward to meet her. "Camilla?" he exclaimed; and he would have taken her hand, but she calmly put back his arm.

"Yes, Francesco: it is I."

"And I see you again, Camilla—and *here*—and in this dress! Ah! I have believed you dead—I never thought to meet you more. Why, why have we been so long apart?"

Camilla was habited as a nun; she was very lovely—pale, pale as death, with something indescribably touching in the melancholy expression of the dark eyes, and in the subdued, sad tones of the sweetest voice that ever breathed on mortal ear, and in the weight of thought that seemed to lie upon a brow, white as the white swathing band that crossed it.

Long ago, the actor and the nun had been betrothed lovers; but just as their engagement was about to be ratified by marriage, Camilla had disappeared from the scene of their attachment—a village not far from Milan; and after many futile attempts to discover the cause of her disappearance, it had been concluded that she had perished mysteriously. Francesco, from that hour becoming unsettled and unsteady, quitted, at last, his former peaceful profession, and entered upon the uncertain calling of an actor.

"And how could you leave me, Camilla?" he continued, his voice faltering as he spoke;—"how could you leave me? Might we not have been so happy? and what are we now? Why have you acted thus?"

She was calm as a statue; but his words—his varying countenance, shewed how much he felt. "Need I remind you," said she, "of the

cause of all this? Were you not false to me? Was not all over *then?*"

"False! Camilla? It might be so; but well hast thou avenged that falsehood—that momentary infatuation—that idle passion, born of circumstances; dying almost in its birth. Was it for that thou hast sacrificed thyself and me—made me what I am—condemned thyself to *this?* True, I sinned against thee; but, hadst thou no forgiveness—no mercy?"

"Art thou not happy, Francesco?" asked the calm tones of the nun.

"Happy? no; judge not by the painted surface of the life I lead—these short-lived triumphs—these sensual pleasures—these frivolous joys. I was not made for this wandering, lonely-hearted existence, to which thou hast doomed me!"

"And to what hast thou not doomed me?" exclaimed the nun, bitterly—"to what hast thou not doomed *me?* This dress—these walls—this life! was I made for *these?*"

The actor sank into a chair, covering his face with his hands. "And for that one transgression—that long-repented wrong—hath so much misery come upon us! But, Camilla, how did you contrive to elude all pursuit? I sought you long and earnestly."

Camilla sat beside him, and told her story.

"Francesco, I loved you well, as my past life, and this moment, prove. Our early attachment—its happy dawning—its sanctioned vows—its prosperous progression—of these I need not speak; you cannot have forgotten them. But your love wandered. I watched the fading embers, with an agony of heart beyond the power of words. I watched the flame sink, then rise, then sink again—the alternations of hope and fear are hard to bear. With my proud, warm nature, think how much I must have suffered! I myself am not one to change, and I could not brook change in others—in you, least of all. Beneath the pain of your fickleness, my very life seemed withering. As for the object of your new passion, *she* was a poor glittering thing—dazzling for the moment. I could not feel jealousy of *her.*" And the nun, with conscious pride, turned full upon the eyes of her lover the wonderful and yet undiminished beauty of her face.

"But I, while despising her, felt yet more bitterly the humiliation of your neglect. Well, but one hour changed hope and fear into a despair that could take no comfort save in revenge. Chance made me the spectator—made me the auditor of your avowal of love to her. Did I not hear it all? Those expressions—passionate, worshipping—the same words you had so often poured forth to mine own ear! But I had strength to listen and to look in silence. I betrayed not my misery to your compassion. Turning from that scene, I took my resolution, and kept it. Since that hour, as well you know, we have never met.

"You ask how I contrived to elude discovery. I fled at once to Milan; I changed my name; I entreated admittance into this convent, telling a story of woe, but not the true one. I obtained permission to take at once the final vows. I became a nun! But when those bright tresses were severed from my head—the tresses whose beauty you had so often praised—I saved the golden treasures, that, when we met again, and parted once again and for ever, I might render them to you as a token of remembrance."

And the nun, taking a packet from her bosom, opened it, and presented it to the actor; and there, indeed, they were—all the long, auburn curls, so silken and so fragrant.

The actor started to his feet. "But we part no more, Camilla! no: I have suffered enough. Let us be happy!"

"Francesco, I am a vowed nun."

"But you were my betrothed wife. Even the claims of the church must give way before those of a husband. I will break these bonds that hold you: we shall yet be happy."

"Not so, Francesco—my vows are binding. We part for ever."

"Nay, Camilla, say not so! We are both young; we love each other. Oh, let nothing come between us! Fly with me! There is some corner of the world where we shall find refuge—some rock of the desert that shall give us shelter." And the actor's faltering voice—his every look and gesture, shewed how much he was in earnest.

"Let me continue," resumed Camilla; "I have yet a little more to say." And she spoke again:—"In the seclusion of my convent, I still thought of my wrongs, and looked forward to this hour; for I knew it would come—I knew that we should meet again. I heard of you—I traced your course—I never lost sight of you through all your varied career. And, Francesco, spite of all the past, in mine own heart I knew you loved me still. As you say, *that* was an idle passion—a momentary caprice; but *this*—the love you bore, and bear for me—I knew would return in all its first force, when its return would be in vain. And so it was. I heard of your anguish when you learned that you had lost me—your rejection of all comfort—your turning in disgust from the light love whose witcheries had caused your falsehood; and I felt I was partly revenged. Then I heard how you abandoned your lucrative profession—your home—your native place, and flung yourself upon unworthy pursuits; seeking refuge in dissipation, from your own miserable thoughts. In the knowledge of what those thoughts must have been, I was again avenged.

"At last, you became an actor; and your praises and your triumphs rang forth on all sides. I heard them, too; and I knew that in the routine of your profession you would visit Milan; and long have I waited for the day: but it hath dawned at last. Ten years have elapsed—ten weary years—through which I have cherished my determination and my desire; both now meet with their fulfilment. I have waited long; at first Fate seemed against me. I had means of learning all your movements; and I heard at the commencement of every season, that you were to visit Milan; and for many seasons I suffered disappointment, for you came not. At one time, some alteration in the arrangements of our theatre prevented your intended appearance; at another, an accident detained you in Rome; at another, some enchantress held you to her feet. *That* was, perhaps, an added pang. Another time, and I heard that you were ill. And then I wept; I feared that you might die—I feared that Death might come between me and my purpose. But, slowly as the hour came, it came at last."

And here the nun paused: but the actor made no remark.

"Until this morning, I, for those ten long years, have never left those walls. Our rules are not strict—many indulgences are ours. I have claimed few of them; and, save the glimpse of sky through that

narrow casement," (and she pointed, as she spoke, to the grated window,) "and save the monotonous prospect spread beneath it—I have never, since my first entrance here, seen aught of the fair face of the external world. But this morning, borrowing the dress of a lay-sister, I went forth upon my mission; and thou knowest how it succeeded. I saw thee once again; the same, and yet so changed."

She advanced more closely towards him, and laying her hand upon his arm, she looked earnestly into his face.

"Time hath touched thee; but the stern characters traced by passion are most visible upon thy brow. Am I changed, Francesco?"

"Ah, no! beautiful—beautiful as ever; yet so pale."

Camilla continued:—"To-night I met you on the threshold of the garden entrance; when we entered this building, it was my hand that closed upon your own. I guided you to this, my dismal home. I am here."

The light from the waxen tapers streamed upon the fair, lovely countenance of the nun—upon her coarse dress—upon her shrouding veil. The light from the waxen tapers streamed upon the splendid figure of the actor—upon his glossy, raven hair—upon his rich attire. It was a picturesque contrast. The same light brought into strong relief the costly crucifix, with its elaborate carving, with the unchangeable expression of mingled love and suffering depicted with such master-skill upon the motionless and marble face.

"Was it you, indeed, Camilla, that met me at the door? I should have known the touch of those small fingers; but I thought not thou wert so near me. I believed thee dead. I little thought to-night would give us to each other once again. Oh, Camilla, hear me plead! —Let us fly together!"

"Francesco, it may not be. I have longed for this meeting, only to bid thee farewell for ever. I have no longer any dream of earthly love; I am the bride of Heaven, and my hopes have long been dust. I have bid thee hither. Oh, Francesco, that I may see thee once again, and hear thee speak—that thou mayest see me once again! I would give thee these tokens of remembrance. Lay them on thy heart to-night ere thou slumberest; lay them on thy heart ere thou passest to thy grave. Remember me, Francesco!—remember me! I will remember thee; and if it is any consolation to thee in this separation to know that I have loved thee, take also that assurance. That I *have* done so, let my story witness; let the patience with which I have awaited this moment—the hope that has sustained me through so many weary years—the feeling that even now almost tempts me to forego my purpose——"

The actor believed these last words to refer to her resolution not to fly her convent. Gaining hope from them, he urged, he entreated her to accompany him—he prayed, he knelt; but all in vain.

"No, Francesco; thou pleadest vainly. Farewell! farewell! go—go in peace: yet, ere thou goest——" And she paused; then turned to the table. Filling a goblet with the wine from the flask, she raised it to her lips: just touching the brim, she handed it to him. "Drink," she cried—"pledge me once, as I have pledged thee."

The actor seized the glass, and drained its contents. "I would pledge thee, Camilla, even though the draught were poison."

"Now, hasten! hasten! thou hast already outstayed the fitting time: there is danger in a longer tarrying. Hasten—hasten!"

The actor rose at her words. His eye was unsteady; his step uncertain: his cheek grew paler as she gazed at him.

"Hasten—hasten!"

They reach the narrow passage—the door into the garden—they cross the garden—they are on the threshold of the garden entrance—he passes through quick as thought—the gate is closed behind him. He is again alone. The night air strikes coldly on his brow—it revives him. He hurries forward, reeling as he hurries forward; grasping in his hand the tokens of remembrance—the long bright locks of hair.

The nun, returning to her desolate chamber, knelt low before the costly crucifix—her face upon the ground. And through that long night, there she was; motionless—silent—her face upon the ground.

The next day, great was the commotion throughout Milan. For the favourite actor, Francesco T——, had been found dying in his bed, by the valet, who had entered his apartment somewhat earlier than usual, according to the express desire of his master, the latter having promised to attend an early rehearsal that morning.

The physician who was summoned, reported it to be a case of poison. All means were tried; but tried in vain. He died that day. Whatever the poison had been, it had been a subtle one, for though some consciousness remained, speech, and the power of motion, were gone. Those that gathered round that miserable death-bed, saw him, with straining eyes, gaze ever at some tresses of bright hair, grasped closely in his clenched hand. They shuddered as they watched the vain attempts at speech—the frightful convulsions. Death came as a release; and they hailed its presence.

And it was a relief to mark how calmly and how peacefully the shadow of dissolution settled on the face that through that weary day had writhed with torture—how statue-like became the noble features, as they faded to the hue of marble—how beautiful, upon the large full eyelids, was the intense repose of that sleep "that knows no waking!"

So he died. And those around, unknowing of the cause of his death—unknowing of his gone-by history, buried with him those long, bright locks of hair, deeming them to be cherished mementos of some unfortunate, or at least hidden, attachment; for Francesco T——, the gay, the brilliant actor, had been, as far as the *affections* were concerned, alone in the world. All could speak of some idle intrigue—some light, passing love, in which this actor had borne a brief part; but that he had any sincere or settled attachment, no one knew.

The actor's death made a "sensation;" but few remarked, and none, perchance, remember, that but a few weeks after his decease, the simple bier of a nun, with its snowy pall, was borne from the Convent of our Lady of Grace to the burying-ground appertaining. It was the funeral of a nun, who, while dying of a rapid decline, had entreated that her body, in its passage to the grave, might be borne through the garden, and forth by the garden entrance, and so to its last resting-place in the burying-ground of her convent of our Lady of Grace.

THE GIANT'S TOY.

(From the German of Adelbert von Chamisso.)

BY JOHN OXENFORD.

The story of Burg Niebeck is in Alsatia told,
The height, where in their fortress the giants dwelt of old;
The fortress now has fallen, a desert is the place,
And would you seek the giants, they have not left a trace.

The giant's infant daughter once from the castle stray'd,
She rambled forth unguarded, before the gate she play'd;
The slope she then descended, for much she wish'd to know,
What sort of things existed down in the vale below.

Her steps are few and rapid, across the wood she strides,
And close to Haslach reaches a land where man abides;
She views the towns and hamlets, she views the cultured field,
A world—how new and wondrous!—is to her eyes reveal'd.

Upon the ground the maiden has chanced to cast her eyes,
A peasant at his labour just by her feet she spies;
The little creature crawling—how very strange it seems!—
The plough, too, in the sunshine, how brilliantly it gleams!

"Oh, here's a pretty plaything! I'll take it home," she says;
And kneeling down she nimbly her outspread kerchief lays;
Then into it the creatures her busy fingers sweep,
And, folding up the kerchief, she bears them in a heap.

She bounds back to the castle—how children bound we know;
She hastens to her father, her wondrous prize to show,
"See, father—dearest father, a charming toy I bring,
I never on our mountain saw such a pretty thing."

The giant was at table, right graciously he smiled,
His fine cool wine he tasted, and thus he ask'd his child:—
"What is it you have brought there? You bound about with glee;
What is it in your kerchief that struggles? Let me see!"

Then spreading out the kerchief, she spreads with serious face,
The plough, the team, the peasant, each in its proper place;
And when upon the table the whole in order stands,
She laughs aloud delighted, with joy she claps her hands.

The father's look is earnest; he says in solemn tone:—
"My child, that is no plaything; what is it thou hast done?
Go where thou first didst find him, replace him quickly—go!
The peasant is no plaything—how couldst thou think him so?

"At once to do my bidding, without a murmur haste,
For were there not the peasant no bread thy lips would taste;
'Tis from the peasant's marrow that we, the giants, spring;
The peasant is no toy, child—that were an awful thing."

The story of Burg Niebeck is in Alsatia told,
The height, where in their fortress the giants dwelt of old;
The fortress now has fallen, and desert is the place,
And wouldst thou seek the giants, they have not left a trace.

A JAR OF HONEY FROM MOUNT HYBLA.

BY LEIGH HUNT.

NO. III.

SUBJECT OF MOUNT ÆTNA CONTINUED.—ITS BEAUTIES.—ITS HORRORS.—REASON WHY PEOPLE ENDURE THEM.—LOVE-STORY OF AN EARTHQUAKE.

THE reader is aware that this our Jar was not intended to be associated with nothing but sweets. Bees, we observed, extracted honey from the bitterest as well as sweetest flowers; and we only stipulated, as they do, for a sweet result—something, that by the very fact of its being deducible from bitterness, shewed the tendency of Nature to that dulcet end, and gave a lesson to her creature man to take thought and warning, and do as much for himself. Were he to do so, and leave off asking her to superintend everything for him, which it seems a manifest condition of things that she should not, (man looking very like an experiment to see how far he can develop the energies of which he is composed, and prove himself worthy of continuance,) how are we to know that he would not get rid of all such evils as do not appear to be necessary to his well-being, and in the language of the great Eastern poet, make "the morning stars sing for joy," that another heaven is added to their list? Mount Ætna, for instance, which is one of the safety-valves of the globe, does not *force* people to live within the sphere of its operations. Why, therefore, should they? Why do not the inhabitants of Catania and other places migrate, as nations have done before an enemy or famine, and plant themselves elsewhere? When the convulsion comes, and destruction hovers over them, the saints are implored as the gods were of old, and everything is referred to the perplexing ordinances of Heaven. But the saints might answer, "Why do you continue to live here, in the teeth of these repeated warnings? and why cannot the earth have safety-valves, but you must needs plant yourselves right in the way of them, as infants might do with steam-engines?" This is the honey that might be extracted from the bitter past. On the other hand, if this be idle speculation, and the reason of the thing be on the side of continuing to implore the saints and perishing in earthquakes, then Nature, always determined at any rate to have no evil unmixed, suggests topics of consolation from the greater amount of good; from the far longer duration of the intervals of serenity and joy around the mountain, compared with those of convulsion; and from all those images of beauty and abundance, which produce another honey against the bitterness of what cannot be altered. The bee himself, like the nightingale and the dove, and other beautiful creatures, is an inhabitant of Ætna. The fires of the mountain help to produce some of his sweetest thyme. The energetic little, warmth-loving, honey-making, armed, threatening, murmuring, bitter-sweet, and useful creature, seems like one of the particles of it, gifted with wings. We might as well have brought our honey from Mount Ætna as Mount Hybla, and very likely it actually came thence; only the latter, like Mount Hymettus, is iden-

tified with the very word, and its district still famous for the product. In fact, (though the name seems to be no longer retained anywhere,) there were several Hyblas of old, one of them at the foot of Ætna; so that our Jar may come from both places. The word, which is older than Greek, was probably Phenician, from a root signifying sweetness; unless it originated in the sound of the bubbling of brooks, of the neighbourhood of which bees are very fond.

We cannot quit Mount Ætna without saying something more of it, especially as it has lately been in action, perhaps is so still, not without an intimation of its existence as far as Scotland, where there have just been some shocks of earthquake. Everybody knows that it is the greatest volcano in Europe, some twenty miles in ascent from Catania, and with a circumference for its base of between eighty and ninety. All the climates of the world are there, except those of the African desert. At the foot are the palms and aloes of the tropics, with the corn, wine, and oil of Italy. The latter continue for fourteen or fifteen miles of ascent. Then come the chestnuts of Spain, then the beeches of England, then the firs of Norway—the whole forest-belt being five or six miles in ascent, interspersed with gigantic park-like scenery, and the most magnificent pastures. The dove, the nightingale, and the bee are there, with abundance of game. The rest, a thousand feet high, is a naked peak, covered for the greater part of the year with snow, but often hot to the feet in the midst of it, toilsome to ascend, and terminating in the great crater, miles in circumference, fuming and blind with smoke—the largest of several others. The whole mountain, with an enormous chasm in its side four or five miles broad, stands in the midst of six and thirty subject mountains, "each a Vesuvius," generated by its awful parent. Horror and loveliness prevail alternately throughout, or together. You look from mountain to mountain over tremendous depths to the most beautiful woody scenery. The lowest region is a paradise, betraying black grounds of lava and beds of ashes, which remind you to what it is liable. And the top is a ghastly white peak, shivering with cold, though a mouth for fire, but lovely at a distance in the light of the moon at night, and presenting a view from itself by day, especially at sunrise, which baffles description with ecstasy. Count Stolberg, a German poet, who beheld this spectacle in the year 1792, when the mountain was in action, says that by the dawning light of the day he saw nothing round about him but snow, and black ashes, vast masses of lava, and a smoking crater, together with a huge bed of clouds, the darkening extremities of which the eye could not clearly distinguish either from the mountains or the sea, "*till the majestic sun rose in fire, and reduced every object to order.*" Chaos seemed to unfold itself, where no four-footed beast, no bird, interrupted the solemn silence of the formless void.

"Wo sie keinen Todten begruben, und keiner erstehn wird,"

as Klopstock says of the ice-encircled pole:

"No dead are buried there; nor any there will rise."

"Ætna cast his black shades over the grey dawn of the western atmosphere, while round him stood his sons, but far beneath, yet

volcanic mountains all, in number six and thirty, each a Vesuvius. To the north, the east, and the south, Sicily lay at our feet, with its hills, and rivers, and lakes, and cities. In the low deep, the clouds, tinged with purple, were dispersed and vanished from the presence of the golden sun; while their shades flying before the west-wind, were scattered over the landscape far and wide."*

Mr. Hughes's description is at once minuter, and still more effective. "At length," says he, "faint streaks of light, shooting athwart the horizon, which became brighter and brighter, announced the approach of the great luminary; and when he sprang up in his majesty, supported on a throne of radiant clouds, that fine scriptural image of the giant rejoicing to run his course, flashed across my mind. As he ascended in the sky, the mountain-tops began to stream with golden light, and new beauties successively developed themselves, until day dawned upon the Catanian plains. Sicily then lay expanded like a map beneath our eyes, presenting a very curious effect; nearly all its mountains could be descried, with the many cities that surmount their summits; more than half its coasts, with their bays, indentations, towns, and promontories, could be traced as well as the entire course of rivers, sparkling like silver bands that encircle the valleys and the plains. Add to this the rich tints of so delightful an atmosphere; add the dark blue tract of sea rolling its mysterious waves, as it were, into infinite space; add that spirit of antiquity which lingers in these charming scenes, infusing a soul into the features of nature, as expression lights up a beautiful countenance; and where will you find a scene to rival that which is viewed from Ætna?"†

Compare this spectacle with one of the great eruptions, and the agonizing days that precede it. Smoke and earthquake commence them. The days are darkened, the nights sleepless and horrible, and seem ten times as long as usual. People rush to the churches in prayer, or crowd in their door-ways (which are thought the safest places), or remain in boats or carriages out of doors. Religious processions move in terror through the streets. Sometimes the air is blackened with a powder, sometimes with ashes, which fall and gather everywhere, such as Pompeii was buried with. Lightnings play about Ætna; the sea rises against the dark atmosphere, in ghastly white billows; dreadful noises succeed, accompanied with thunder, like batteries of artillery; the earth rocks; landslips take place down the hill-sides, carrying whole fields and homesteads into other men's grounds; cities are overthrown, burying shrieking thousands; and at length, the mountain bursts out in flame and lava, perhaps in forty or fifty places at once, the principal crater throwing out hot glowing stones, which have been known to be carried eighteen miles, and the frightful mineral torrent running forth in streams of fiery red, pouring down into the plains, climbing over walls, effacing estates, and rushing into and usurping part of the bed of the sea. A river of it has been known to be fifty feet deep, and four miles broad.‡ Fancy such a

* "Travels through Germany, Switzerland, Italy," &c. Translated by Holcroft, vol. iv., p. 298.

† Quoted in Evans's "Classic and Connoisseur in Italy and Sicily," vol. ii., p. 358.

‡ Vide Swinburne's "Travels in the Two Sicilies," vol. iv., p. 148.

stream coming towards London, the whole width of Oxford-street, Bayswater, and Kensington, as far as Shepherd's Bush! By degrees, it cakes into a black and rustling half-liquid, rather pushed along than flowing; though its heat has been found lingering after a lapse of eight years. And when the survivors of all these horrors gather breath, and look back upon time and place, they find houses and families abolished, and have to begin, as it were, their stunned existence anew.

Yet they build again over these earthquakes; they inhabit and delight in this mountain; and Catania, the city at its foot, which has been several times demolished, is one of the gayest in Italy.

How is this?

The reason is, that all pain, generally speaking, is destined to be short and fugitive, compared with the duration of a greater comparative amount of pleasure;—that the souls that perish in the convulsion, were themselves partakers of that pleasure for the greater part of their lives, perhaps the gayest of the gay city;—that all were born there, or connected with it;—that it is inconvenient, perhaps without government aid impossible, to remove, and commence business elsewhere;—that they do not think the catastrophe likely to recur soon, perhaps not in the course of their lives;—nay, that possibly there may be something of a taste of gambling excitement,—of the stimulus of a mixture of hope and fear,—in thus living on the borders of life and death,—of this great snap-dragon bowl of Europe,—especially surrounded as they are with the old familiar scenes, and breathing a joyous atmosphere. But undoubtedly the chief reasons are the necessity, real or supposed, and the natural tendency of mankind to make the best of their position and turn their thoughts from sadness. So the Catanian goes to his dinner or to a party of pleasure, and builds a new ball-room *out of the lava!*

Perhaps the most touching of all the consolations to be met with in the history of these catastrophes, is the testimony they bear to the maternal affections. The men who perish from the overthrow of houses are said to be generally found in attitudes of resistance:—the women are bent double over their children. The great vindication of evil is, that (constituted as we are) we could not know so much joy, nor manifest so much virtue, without it; and certainly, in instances like these, it fetches out, under circumstances of the extremest weakness, the most beautiful strength of the human heart. Still, such wholesale trials of it do not appear to be demanded by any unavoidable necessity. The fact forces itself upon the mind, that human beings need not continue to live in such places, and that the geological well-being of the globe does not demand it. As to animals of the inferior creation, who are destroyed at these times, assuredly they know no more about it till the last moment, than the lamb who licks the hand of his slayer; and as soon as the mountain is cleared, the larks and nightingales are again singing, and the bees enjoying the flowers in its most awful ravines.

For months, for years, sometimes for a hundred years and more, perhaps for many hundreds, this tremendous phenomenon is quiet. Homer does not seem to have heard of its burning. The volcano first makes its appearance in Pindar. Theocritus knew its capabilities well; yet he speaks of it as nothing but a place of pastoral felicity. His

Polyphemus contrasts its serenity with the dangers of the sea; and another of his shepherds, in answer to an observation about fathers and mothers, says to a shepherd of the plains, that Ætna is *his* mother, and that he is as rich in sheep and goats as the latter fancies himself during dreams. The first recorded eruption was in the time of Empedocles, about five hundred years before Christ; and from that time to the year 1819 inclusive, a French writer has calculated that there have been seventy-two others *mentioned*.* We cannot say how many more have ensued. The one that has just taken place was harmless, we believe, as far as lives are concerned, except to the rash persons who were too anxious to see the effect of the lava upon a pool of water, which it turned into scalding steam. Slight eruptions are little regarded, and indeed are little dangerous compared with what precedes them. The worst peril is in the earthquake;—the lava, though an ugly customer, can be better treated with. And even slight earthquakes are not much heeded, after the first alarm. Mr. Vaughan, an English traveller, in the year 1810, says, that upon going into the town of Messina, after a slight shock, from his country-lodging, and approaching the carriages in which some ladies were sitting in expectation of another, he said to one of them, an acquaintance of his, "Is it not shocking?" "It is indeed very shocking," said the lady. "*You were not at the opera?*"† Humboldt speaks of a young lady in South America, who was so accustomed to these visitations, that she seemed to think the topic vulgar; and expressed a wish that people would leave off talking about "these nasty earthquakes."

If you tell a Sicilian that there are no earthquakes in England, he acknowledges, of course, the merit of their absence, but smiles to think that you can suppose it a compensation for the want of vines and Sicily. The following amusing conversation took place in an inn, between the English traveller just mentioned and a priest and his landlady, at Caltagirone. The priest, "after many apologies for the liberty he was taking," says Mr. Vaughan, "begged to converse with me upon the subject of England, which the people of these parts were very anxious to hear about, as the opportunity of inquiring so seldom occurred; and, by the time I had dined, I observed a dozen people collected round the door, with their eyes and mouths open, to hear the examination.

"'And pray, signor, is it true what we are told, that you have no olives in England?"‡

"'Yes, perfectly true.'

"'Cospetto! how so?'

"'Cospettone!'§ said the lady.

"'Our climate is not propitious to the growth of the olive.'

"'But then, signor, for oranges!'

"'We have no oranges neither.'

"'Poveretto?' said the landlady, with a tone of compunction; which

* "Voyage Critique à l'Ætna," tom. 1. p. 529.

† Vide the Letters appended to a "View of the Present State of Italy," translated from the Italian, by Thomas Wright Vaughan, Esq., p. lxx.

‡ Olives and bread form the principal part of the food of the lower classes in Sicily, and oil is a necessary of life.

§ About equivalent to "zounds" and "gadzooks."

is a sort of fondling diminutive of 'Povero,' 'Poor creature,' or as you would say to your child, 'Poor little manikin!'

"'But how is that possible, signor?' said the priest. 'Have you no fruit in your country?'

"'We have very fine fruit; but our winters are severe, and not genial enough for the orange-tree.'

"'That is just what they told me,' said the lady, 'at Palermo, that England is all snow, and a great many stones.'

"'But then, signor, we have heard, what we can scarcely believe, that you have not any wine?'

"'It is perfectly true. We have vines that bear fruit, but the sun in our climate is not sufficiently strong, which must be boiling, as it is here, to produce any wine.'

"'Then, Jesu Maria! how the deuce do you do?'

"I told them that, notwithstanding, we got on pretty well; that we had some decent sort of mutton, and very tolerable-looking beef; that our poultry was thought eatable, and our bread pretty good; that, instead of wine, we had a thing they call ale, which our people, here and there, seemed to relish exceedingly; and that, by the help of these articles, a good *constitution*, and the blessing of God, our men were as hardy, and as loyal and brave, and our women as accomplished, and virtuous, and handsome, as any other people, I believed, under heaven.

"'Besides, Mr. Abbate, I beg leave to ask you, what cloth is your coat of?'

"'Cospetto! it is English!' with an air of importance.

"'And your hat!'

"'Why, that's English.'

"'And this lady's gown, and her bonnet and ribbons?'

"'Why, they are English.'

"'All English. Then you see how it is: we send you in exchange for what we don't grow, half the comforts and conveniences you enjoy in your island. Besides, padrona mia gentile, (*my agreeable landlady*,) we can never regret that we don't grow these articles, since it ensures us an intercourse with a nation we esteem!'

"'*Viva!*' said the landlady, and '*Bravo!*' said the priest; and, between *bravo* and *viva*, the best friends in the world, I escaped to my lettiga, (litter.)"*

We must close this article with a love-story, in connexion with the dreadful earthquake of 1783, which destroyed Messina, and swept into the sea, *in one moment*, nearly three thousand persons on the opposite coast of Scylla, together with their prince.† The reader may believe as much of the love as he pleases, but the extraordinary circumstance on which it turns is only one of a multitude of phenomena, all equally true and marvellous.

Giuseppe, a young vine-grower in a village at the foot of the mountains looking towards Messina, was in love with Maria, the daughter of the richest bee-master of the place; and his affection, to the great

* "View of Sicily," ut supra, p. lxxix.

† It is calculated that 40,000 souls perished in this convulsion. In the greatest of all the Sicilian earthquakes, that of 1693, the earth shook but four minutes, and overthrew almost all the towns on the eastern side of the island.

displeasure of the father, was returned. The old man, though he had encouraged him at first, wished her to marry a young profligate in the city, because the latter was richer and of a higher stock; but the girl had a great deal of good sense as well as feeling; and the father was puzzled how to separate them, the families having been long acquainted. He did everything in his power to render the visits of the lover uncomfortable to both parties; but as they saw through his object, and love can endure a great deal, he at length thought himself compelled to make use of insult. Contriving, therefore, one day to proceed from one mortifying word to another, he took upon him, as if in right of offence, to anticipate his daughter's usual attention to the parting guest, and shew him out of the door himself, adding a broad hint that it might be as well if he did not return very soon.

"Perhaps, Signor Antonio," said the youth, piqued at last to say something harsh himself, "you do not wish the son of your old friend to return at all?"

"Perhaps not," said the bee-master.

"What," said the poor lad, losing all the courage of his anger in the terrible thought of his never having any more of those beautiful lettings out of the door by Maria,—"what! do you mean to say I may not hope to be invited again, even by yourself?—that you yourself will never again invite me, or come to see me?"

"Oh, we shall all come, of course, to the great Signor Giuseppe," said the old man, looking scornful,—"all cap in hand."

"Nay, nay;" returned Giuseppe, in a tone of propitiation; "I'll wait till you do me the favour to look in some morning, in the old way, and have a chat about the French; and perhaps," added he, blushing, "you will then bring Maria with you, as you used to do; and I wont attempt to see her till then."

"Oh, we'll all come of course," said Antonio, impatiently; "cat, dog, and all; and when we *do*," added he, in a very significant tone, "you may come again yourself."

Giuseppe tried to laugh at the jest, and thus still propitiate him; but the old man hastening to shut the door, angrily cried, "Ay, cat, dog, and all, and the cottage besides, with Maria's dowry along with it; and then you may come again, *and not till then*." And so saying he banged the door, and giving a furious look at poor, pale Maria, went into another room to scrawl a note to the young citizen.

The young citizen came in vain, and Antonio grew sulkier and angrier every day, till at last he turned his bitter jest into a vow; exclaiming with an oath, that Giuseppe should never have his daughter, till he (the father), daughter, dog, cat, cottage, bee-hives and all, with her dowry of almond-trees to boot, set out some fine morning to beg the young vine-dresser to accept them.

Poor Maria grew thin and pale, and Giuseppe looked little better, turning all his wonted jests into sighs, and often interrupting his work to sit and look towards the said almond-trees, which formed a beautiful clump on an ascent upon the other side of the glen, sheltering the best of Antonio's bee-hives, and composing a pretty dowry for the pretty Maria, which the father longed to see in the possession of the flashy young citizen.

One morning, after a very sultry night, as the poor youth

sat endeavouring to catch a glimpse of her in this direction, he observed that the clouds gathered in a very unusual manner over the country, and then hung low in the air, heavy and immovable. Towards Messina the sky looked so fiery, that at first he thought the city on fire, till an unusual heat affecting his own skin, and a smell of sulphur arising, and the little river at his feet assuming a tinge of a muddy ash-colour, he knew that some convulsion of the earth was at hand. His immediate impulse was to cross the ford, and, with mixed anguish and delight, again find himself in the cottage of Antonio, giving the father and daughter all the help in his power. A tremendous burst of thunder and lightning startled him for a moment; but he was proceeding to cross, when his ears tingled, his head turned giddy, and while the earth heaved beneath his own feet, he saw the whole opposite side of the glen lifted up with a horrible deafening noise, and then the cottage itself, with all around it, cast, as he thought, to the ground, and buried for ever. The sturdy youth, for the first time in his life, fainted away; and when his senses returned, found himself pitched back into his own premises, but not injured, the blow having been broken by the vines.

But on looking in horror towards the site of the cottage up the hill, what did he see there? or rather, what did he *not* see there? And what *did* he see, forming a new mound, furlongs down the side of the hill, almost at the bottom of the glen, and in his own very homestead?

Antonio's cottage.—Antonio's cottage, with the almond trees, and the bee-hives, and the very cat and dog, and the old man himself, and the daughter (both senseless) all come, as if, in the father's words, to beg him to accept them! Such awful pleasantries, so to speak, sometimes take place in the middle of Nature's deepest tragedies, and such exquisite good may spring out of evil.

For it was so in the end, if not in the intention. The old man (who, together with his daughter, had only been stunned by terror) was superstitiously frightened by the dreadful circumstance, if not affectionately moved by the attentions of the son of his old friend, and the delight and religious transport of his child. Besides, though the cottage and the almond trees, and the bee-hives, had all come miraculously safe down the hill (a phenomenon which has frequently occurred in these extraordinary *landslips*), the flower-gardens, on which his bees fed, were almost all destroyed; his property was lessened, his pride lowered; and when the convulsion was well over, and the guitars were again playing in the valley, he consented to become the inmate for life of the cottage of the enchanted couple.

He could never attain, however, to the innate delicacy of his child, and he would sometimes, with a petulant sigh, intimate at table what a pity it was that she had not married the rich and high-feeding citizen. At such times as these, Maria would gather one of her husband's feet between her own under the table, and with a *squeeze* of it, that repaid him tenfold for the mortification, would steal a look at him which said, "I possess all which it is possible for me to desire."

ORIANA AND VESPERELLA; OR, THE CITY OF PEARLS.

BY JOHN HAMILTON.

CHAPTER II.

The ravishing songs of the birds, and of the brook quite took captive the fancy of Oriana, while Vesperella kept her eyes constantly on those of her mother, watching the shadows of thought which came and faded in the large dark orbs of that majestic lady. They all advanced towards the chair; and Auressa seated herself therein with a fixed look, which had more of despair in it than of unmixed resolution. For a few moments, not a word was spoken. But the queen, quickly recalling her noble serenity, addressed her two daughters in these words:—

"My children! this is the last evening I shall ever counsel you or guard you from the many perils to which even princesses are exposed in their travels through this singularly harsh world!"

The two daughters advanced hastily in weeping and fear; but Auressa motioned them to silence with a wave of her hand, and continued, in a deep resigned tone of voice, which sounded in those pastoral shades like the lonely foredooming of a dying prophetess—

"Oriana, and you, my Vesperella! Be not cast into an idle wailing at this my dying charge to you, but bear up as it becomes my daughters, that you may the better heed all I would entrust to your hearts.

"You have often marvelled that I should for a week in every year absent myself from you, giving no tidings of my departure, and allowing no busy interrogations at my reappearance:—But now, as I am about for ever to quit you, I feel spelled to reveal to you the cause of my absence. Know, then, that in my youth (I begin thus because I have hitherto ever studiously hid from you the mysteries of my life, and even the qualities of your own birthright) I was called the Queen of Day, from the exceeding beauty which it pleased my mother and the ladies about the court to see in me; and the fame of my features spread so widely, that princes sent, from the furthest corners of the earth, the most ardent protestations of love and the warmest entreaties to marriage.

"These numerous and repeated appeals from the handsomest and richest monarchs of the earth only pampered the vanities of my heart and inclined me to treat all mankind with utter disdain. I refused at least a hundred hands a day; and my escritoire was so burthened with tender letters, that the waiting-women and the pages of my mother were employed all day and night in burning heaps of these applications in the garden of the palace; and the fires night and day for many months resembled those of the peasants when they burn heath on an open waste. I reserved about a thousand only of the choicest epistles, to read over to myself in my earliest marriage days, and to shew to my husband, in proof of my exceeding condescension in accepting him. These I have lately also had burned, that many queens of the earth may not be pained by knowing how devotedly attached their spouses were to me. But I am lingering too long over my foolish days.

"One afternoon, when the weather was very sultry, I strayed by

myself into the garden of the palace, and loosed my hair in the idle breeze to be at perfect ease, and to enjoy what little breath was astray over the flowers. I wandered so indolently, and so long time, that the sun set, and the stars arose in clusters high over my head. Never saw I so many stars before in the sky, though my mother had taught me to watch and distinguish them. The evening retained its serenity and its warmth so well, that I sat down by a sheet of water in which a fountain was playing and scattering its watery lights as in mockery of those in heaven.

"As I was reclining there, in a kind of wakeful dream, painting images in the trees of objects I had read of in books, and shaping light visions in fairy fantasy,—on a sudden a princely and airy figure advanced through a silvery arch formed by the fountain and glided like air towards me. His eyes were soft and tender, like the evening star, and his hair curled over his shoulders even as the falling of vines. He looked of starlight,—I felt enamoured of his presence immediately that I beheld it. Many shadowy attendants were about him; but he heeded none. At my feet he kneeled, saying, that he had long seen me, though himself unseen; that he loved me to distraction; would die for me—pine for me; with many other of those enchanting sayings, spoken only by lips of lovers and tender princes. He declared himself to be the prince of the stars; and promised, if I would consent to be his bride, to create me a palace for myself. I could not of course say nay to so pleasing an adorer, and appointed the next day to join him with all my jewels and embroideries, and to quit my home for ever.

"That night I returned as quickly as I could to the palace of my mother, and sent for the old fairy who was friendly to our house, and to her I unburthened the secret of my passion and its object; and she declared that my lover was all that he described himself to be, and moreover an immortal. I requested that the fairy would, on this occasion, grant me one boon, as a marriage kindness, and the good woman kindly consented, if her powers allowed, to realize all that my imagination could devise to make me happy. I asked for immortality, that my heart might for ever beat beside that of my adorable prince; but the fairy declared her power could not so far extend. 'You have seen,' said she, 'stars fall—those are the mortal loves whom the deathless spirits of the stars love!' She could not grant me all my boon, but she endued me with beauty through my life, and a life of many years, with a steady affection in my lover, and with the blessing of two daughters of matchless charms, who should severally wed a king and a prince. You two, Oriana and Vesperella, have in late years made her words true. But she told me that myself and my palace were not to live for ever;—that when the finest apple-tree in the orchard should blossom of an *autumnal* evening, and the sunlight sleep on the brow of those blossoms, I was to send my page to the tree, and she would meet him there as a bird, to tell me how fate decreed. That if my days were numbered, I was to call my daughters into the magic orchard, give to each of them a feather of a swan, (which I now commit to your keeping,) and bid them an eternal adieu.

"I learned from her, my children, that the feather, as long as each continues good and virtuous, will continue white, and that it will darken in proportion as your failings increase. Remember this, and preserve it stainless, as you love me. I feel that death is near at hand, and you see the sun hath nearly taken farewell of the tree.

"You two, my daughters, must quit me; for if your feet be upon my land, when the palace goes to ruin, you will share in that ruin. Kiss me, therefore, and depart in haste: it is my dying wish and command. Nay, do not speak against my decree, Vesperella, for it is not in mortal power to save me. I have seen my husband once a-year for ages, and yet you see how well-favoured I yet remain."

The eyes of the queen began to grow suddenly dim; and the eagerness with which she commanded her children to depart could not longer be withstood, though Vesperella would fain have died with her mother, had not the latter frowned a denial with her pale and dying forehead. The two daughters kissed their mother over and over again; and Oriana, having placed her gift among her jewels, hugged the casket close, and departed with an unfeeling fear for her own safety, quite unbecoming so young and well-educated a daughter.

Poor Vesperella, more dead than alive, staggered after her sister, having placed with many kisses her white feather, the dying gift of her mother, in her yet whiter bosom. She looked continually behind, and saw the beloved mother becoming more shadowy and indistinct, and the trees in the orchard fading into the most vapoury forms, so that they seemed like green clouds.

The two sisters quitted the gate; and on Vesperella turning round to gain one last look at her mother, not a vestige of the orchard, the adamant wall, or the palace remained. But in their place was a wide heath, with the sky only in the distance. She sat down and wept nigh to break her heart. Oriana dropped a few hasty tears, but felt no deep grief, and the sight of her casket restored the smiles to her face, as they had never been absent. On opening the lid, however, she perceived that the feather had lost that lustrous whiteness which it possessed when given her by the hand of her departed mother. The old nurse of these two now deserted princesses was never again seen, for she had, unperceived, returned to secure the jewels that had fallen on the floor, and was lost with the palace, not having been able to make good her slow and rustling retreat.

Vesperella sat for many hours bathing her cheek with her tears, and calling upon the name of her mother with a sad fondness which betrayed how dear it was to her. Not all the entreaties or the threats of Oriana could for a long time revive her, till the evening so far advanced that it became necessary for the sisters to seek some shelter for the night. Vesperella then arose, as well as she was able, and walked along by the light of the stars, which certainly were most bountiful of their beams; and she continually took the swan-feather from her bosom, pressing it to her lips with affectionate prayers for the weal of her parent, and with vows of attention to the preservation of the present's purity.

"Ah me!" said Vesperella, looking up to heaven with eyes quite red with weeping, and heart more depressed than tongue can describe. "Ah me! ye pleasant lights that seem to look down with gracious smiles upon your wretched princesses, retire some, I pray, of you into the innermost sky and send our father, of whose fate we know so little, to comfort and save his wandering daughters. I cannot but grieve that my royal mother should have told so indistinctly her tale of life,—that my shadowy sire should be perfectly strange to my heart, and the site of his palace remain as unknown to me as are the many nations hinted at in past days by my nurse. Where are we to seek the stairs

that will bear us to the princely habitations of our parent? In what garden plays that magic fountain, through which he came a wooing to my mother? I fear, Oriana, we shall never walk amidst those precious and immortal lights; for little can we hope to find a way, while breath is with us, from the earth on which we now so desertedly sojourn to the regions of the sky." Thus mourned the poor princess, as she sadly and slowly followed her more resigned sister.

"Do not be so cast down, Vesperella!" replied Oriana, looking back with a light countenance. "You are the veriest milk-spirited girl that ever whiled away her days in sewing of samplers or kissing of nurses. Those many stars above us are assuredly our vassals, and doubtless we shall hit upon some plan of reaching their blue kingdom before we die. I should like vastly to see our curious parent; and if he have a sparkle of affection in his disposition, he will not fail to visit us at some fitting and opportune hour."

In this tart and witty manner did the untired and ungrieving princess reply to her wearied sister, for she had a most brave invention, it must be confessed, and could say brighter things than any lady of her age or favour in those celebrated times.

"But where are we to sleep, Oriana?" exclaimed her timorous follower; "for the thorns begin to prick my feet, and the night is getting chill, and no house appears before us. Who knows," continued Vesperella, clasping her trembling hands, "but we may fall a prey to some wild and terrible lion, or lose ourselves on these fearful wastes, and starve to death?"

Grief began to give way to hunger in the princesses, and Oriana quieted her gnawing trouble with sweet comfits, which she had taken care to store in her casket, she being remarkable at the court for having a sweet tooth. Poor Vesperella was obliged to feed herself with patience—a kind of diet very good for the spirit, but generally allowed to be but little nutritious or pleasurable to the bodily palate. She began to think of lying down on the heath for the night, nigh careless of her fate, and quite spent with the fatigue of sorrow, travel, and fasting, when Oriana espied the light of a tall house, about the distance of half a mile before them. "There, you whimperer, take heart and banish these your silly tears! I warrant you this building will afford us all that we require." Vesperella answered not a word to the pertness of her sister, but quickened her pace, not at all dismayed with the apparent chance of a night's rest under a roof and a counterpane.

They came up at last with a huge lonely house on the dark heath, the only object for miles around them; and though at any other time they would have shrunk from entering so black and ungainly a tenement, yet, in the present scarcity of dwellings, they looked on this solitary house with eyes of considerable satisfaction. A single light was burning in the lofty window, as if to lead all benighted wanderers to a shelter; and its rays went afar, being in no wise checked by a wall, or tree, or bush. A huge dog, with one wild eye, came towards them, but passed by, as if he did not see them, though Oriana stepped behind her sister with much alarm, and Vesperella shrank within herself, and gave up all hopes of escaping the tremendous jaws of the beast.

Oriana immediately knocked at the gate; and with that sort of confidence and continuance which she thought becoming in a princess,

and more particularly at so old and rude an entrance. Vesperella stood trembling behind, in the most utter fear and sorrow. The door opened, and the two damsels entered with suitable alacrity. But what was the horror of the princesses, to behold a dreadful ogre, as tall as the ceiling, with nails on his hands like the talons of an eagle, his hair like tangled snakes, and with one eye only, which burned lidless and red in the middle of his forehead! He grinned a frightful joy at their appearance, and closed the gate behind them. He then advanced to them; but, on the sudden, stopped, with a hideous roar that shook every window in the old hollow house, and his hands plunged in amongst the mazes of his snaky hair with a mad violence that seemed to be occasioned by some intense bodily anguish. The princesses would have dropped senseless on the floor, but for a low voice, which whispered the words, "Go on, but beware of the ring!" They tottered forwards in the wildest fear; and that fierce ogre went writhing before them, like some distorted and frenzied giant, made mad with agony or hunger. He threw his long hairy arms about, and danced furiously before them, bellowing in a language which the princesses could in no way comprehend, and flashing forked fire from his solitary and blood-red eye.

Oriana leaned on her sister, who said earnest prayers in silence, and asked for help of all good powers to sustain her in this hour of terror and danger. Her hopes and her fears seemed to cling round her very heart in aching helplessness; nevertheless, she bore up now in strange resignation, and supported her scared sister as well as she was able. The ogre threw open a large door, which led into a spacious room, wherein, at the upper end, dozed another of the species. He motioned them to enter, and called hastily to his sleeping companion, who yawned so frightfully during his recovery from sleep, that his mouth looked like a cavern, and his splintered and uneven teeth resembled the jagged rocks within it. The voice again whispered, "Go on, yet beware of the ring!" The princesses staggered helplessly into the room, and the two ogres rushed towards them, but both of them were convulsed as the first had been, and became nearly withered up with agony and anger. They reeled in loud fury and drunken pain around the trembling and statue-like princesses, and their hair twined and shook like newly awakened serpents. The red fire of their eyes deepened, and flashed at times like a stormy autumnal evening sky.

At a large oaken table, made of the united trunks of trees, the two ogres had been making, as it would appear, a human repast, for the hand of a young infant was left half gnawed in the dish, and on each of their plates were small arm and other bones, freshly and cleanly picked. The ogres pointed to the fragments, and in an uncouth way, invited the princesses to partake thereof, at which invitation the latter shrank back with shuddering horror. The monsters retired growling together to their old seats. Immediately, a table arose before them, covered with store of excellent viands, dainty dates, with figs, with silver bowls of fragrant wine, and fruit. Damask seats appeared also by their sides, inviting them to rest; and of these the terrified damsels, without uttering a word to each other, tremblingly availed themselves. The low voice said again, "Eat, but beware of the ring!"

In vain did the princesses endeavour to reach forth their hands; for fear had so unnerved them, that they could not command the use of them. The fruit, however, offered itself to their lips; and Oriana, in

some sort relieved of her first horror, and being tempted by the odour and beauty of the pines, nectarines, and apricots, ate a few mouthfuls, and sipped a little of the dainty and sparkling wine. Vesperella could not taste of fruit or wine, but sat in silent terror and watchfulness.

As soon as Oriana had eaten and drank of the feast, a beautiful hawk perched on her wrist, and fawned with his brown plumed neck against her white arm. She smoothed his wing, and admired him as well as she could, being much addicted to the love of that species of bird, having ofttimes sported with it in her mother's garden. The hawk, on perceiving himself to be so well received, put his beak under his wing, and bringing forth a ring, offered it to the pleased and foolish Oriana; and she would have accepted it, had not Vesperella, who, from suspicion and fear, had narrowly watched everything around her, struck the ring out of the bird's beak to the ground. The hawk screamed a shrill gibbering sound, and shot back with fiery eyes to his perch. The table, with all its viands, sank in the floor, and the ogres yelled till the echoes of the house were worn out with the dismal and horrid sounds.

Nothing could possibly equal the fear of the two damsels; and they looked for little else but death, and that of the most horrid kind, from the two glaring monsters, who sat yelling unceasingly at the end of the room. These ogres, seeing their renewed fear, and being provoked by hunger (not having eaten human meat for an hour or more), again made up towards them, displaying fangs as long as scythes, and flashing fire from their solitary and spacious eyes. But the same pain struck them when they would have seized upon the princesses, and they slunk back, like terrified elephants, to their oaken table, marvelling, in their rough way, at the power that shielded so pretty a meal from getting between their magnificent fangs.

Thus sat these poor damsels all the night; for neither of them dared to sleep, lest they should be devoured unawares; and as for Vesperella, she would gladly have died an innocent death, if such could have been had for asking. Oriana never let go her casket of jewels, but held them with a perseverance truly miraculous in so youthful and unguarded a lady. As soon as the morning broke, the princesses being once more advised by the friendly voice, arose and retreated from the dismal abode of the ogres; and these monsters followed them at a little distance to the door, longing to pounce upon them, yet fearing the singular reward which they had previously received for their endeavours. The country before the house seemed interminable, and the sky lowered, as though a storm of great fury would soon ravage the earth. Nevertheless, the tempest of a hundred skies was not to be dreaded like the enormous thunder of the two yelling ogres, besides, the sky was not likely to devour them up, which was by no means improbable with the two giants. The princesses, therefore, putting their hoods up, sallied forth, passed the frightful dog, who went by them with the same surly yet gloomy unconcern, and made the best of their way from a house and company to which they had never been accustomed before, and which, on this their first acquaintance, they could not but be dissatisfied with. Oriana turned round with a half distrust and half curiosity, and lo! she saw the ogres leaning out at the two huge parlour windows, watching them with eyes of the most intense hunger and fire, and chanting savage songs, which were heard for many miles over the country.

THE ELLISTON PAPERS.

(Second Series.)

EDITED BY GEORGE RAYMOND.

A Gambling-house Scene—Generosity of Elliston—A Death-bed Repentance—"Curious old books!"—Suits of Armour—Ancient Records of the "Circus"—Rowland Hill.

THE partial eclipse into which the comedian's fame had been thrown, by the shadow of Phipps' letter over its surface, being now at an end, and the luminary once again in its full splendour, we will forget all causes of the worthy actuary's anger, as related in our last, and proceed to the more grateful task of recounting an act of generosity, by which the moral debt of our hero will be considerably lightened, and himself restored to the favour of the indulgent reader.

Amongst the various places of Elliston's resort for the purpose of hazard, was a house in the neighbourhood of Blackfriars, where he had occasionally met Mr. L——, a young gentleman of sickly appearance, but who still followed up the phantom with that excitement so peculiar to the passion of play, and which, for the time, is able to sustain the weakest frame in all the heated combinations of its pursuit. At places of this kind, personal intercourse is generally no other than that arising from the traffic of the table, nor does a thought or word transpire which is not employed on the undivided purpose of rapine. So long as the gold glitters on the table, no inquiries are made—recognition extends not beyond the walls of the moral lazaret, and consciousness of the longest acquaintance nightly expires, as the object himself passes from the presence of the observer.

But respecting this young man, a more particular history has reached us. If not the most striking, he was perhaps one of the most melancholy examples of a gambler's state ever witnessed. Mr. L—— was, at this time, about twenty-six years of age. Disease had already possessed him under that form, which so frequently mingles the cruel mockery of hope with the most peremptory fiat of mortal certainty. His manners were gentle—his temper unassailable; and at those brief intervals when the demon passion of play permitted his mind a moment's freedom, he exhibited an understanding of no ordinary quality, and a taste (particularly in the fine arts) highly cultivated. But the whole occupation of his flickering existence was literally passing to and fro, from his own home to this apartment of despair. Here, in the evening, he arrived at about eight o'clock, in a hackney-coach, and by the same means, at any unknown hour, quitted the house on his return. Here, with the entire sum of his estate and strength, he was a nightly visitor, for his other hours were literally a course of exhaustion—his daily journey between a mortal and a moral grave.

With this gentleman, Elliston had sometimes conversed, and more frequently played. It happened on a certain evening the comedian had been singularly fortunate—had won a considerable sum, the greater portion of it, the proceeds of Mr. L——'s purse. The majority of the company had by this time departed; indeed, all the *habitués* of the house, except Elliston and his companion, who continued their

play. Good fortune still followed our hero, and by two o'clock, he was a winner to the full amount of his adversary's ready effects—perhaps of his resources. But Mr. L—— was calm and unruffled. He paid his money, and handed over some further acknowledgments.

"You will still play on?" said Elliston. "You must recover some of this to-night."

"No, not to-night," responded Mr. L——.

"Nay, you must take some vengeance of me," continued the other; "the jade must be wooed; take my word for it, she'll be fond after pouting. Come, we have played before together!"—saying which, he presented sundry bank-notes to his companion, and again set the table.

The game was renewed—the stakes higher; and at the conclusion of another hour, Elliston was still a considerable winner.

A slight flush, rather of exhaustion than anxiety, passed over the features of Mr. L——, and he rose to depart.

"I do not like this," said Elliston; "we must not part at such odds as these; you shall still have your revenge, and to-night, too."

L—— rebuked him only with a faint smile, adding, "We're later than usual. Do you hear what a night it is? I will set you down."

"As you please; but I have protested you shall have your revenge. The cards here are against you—another place will be more fortunate. Are you content to try again? You shall have luck to-night; but not here—not here."

"What do you propose?" asked L——, with animation.

"Come. I'll shew you."

The companions now entered the hackney-coach, and after a drive of fifteen minutes, were set down in Stratford-place. Elliston led Mr. L—— into an apartment, and some refreshment being at hand, they partook accordingly.

"I have disappointed you so far," said Elliston; "this is not quite the gay scene you may have anticipated. But courage! your more immediate object is here," (continued he, shuffling the cards.) "I never won a guinea in my own house yet, and I am sure Fortune will not be inclined to follow me, on such a night as this, after abandoning her so scurvily in Blackfriars."

"Come, then, to a little further business," replied L——.

Down they sat. Luck now blew from a fresh quarter under the new sky in which they played. L—— was recovering—a transient, treacherous success, adding mockery only to the certain course of the infatuated gamester. Again—again he lost; new loans were advanced, and further acknowledgments handed over to his opponent. It was now past three o'clock.

"Why, how is this?" said Elliston, with marked gravity, as he deliberately turned up a pile of notes, and spread the specialities before him—"this is a large amount, Mr. L——, a very considerable sum of money. You must have lost——"

"More, perhaps, than my friend has won," interrupted the other, with a bitterness unusual to him—"the debt—the debt! What is the debt?" demanded he, impatiently.

"True; it must be lessened," replied the comedian, in a sententious tone. "I think—I am sure it may. At any rate, you have a better security to give me for my demands. I am not quite satisfied."

"Mr. Elliston," cried the other, as a sudden flush spotted his pale

cheek, "what am I to think of this night's transaction—this strange irritation? Does a man necessarily forfeit his credit with his money? And though I know you for a fair dealer, yet let me remind you, that he who provokes the game does little better than take advantage of his friend."

"Will you for five minutes resume your seat?" said Elliston, solemnly—"we must not part yet. They tell me I am fond of long speeches, but I'll be brief, for our time is so. I have told you I must have further—better security for the work done to-night—I am not satisfied. But in the first place, here"—(continued he, in the tone of one calmly determined)—"here, Mr. L——, is the cash, and the whole amount of what I have this night won from you; and that we may proceed without fear of retracing a step, I seriously pronounce, no power on earth shall induce me to retain one guinea."

L—— gazed in speechless attention—he knew not the nature of his own emotions.

"This has been a long sitting," resumed Elliston,—"has broken deeply into our rest, but it shall close to our comfort—to our happiness, if you but permit it. Mr. L——, you are far from a state of health—perhaps not a long-lived man; think how little time, therefore, could be given to reflection, even were the whole amount so devoted. Do not despise the admonition of even an erring man; and let not pride, that pitiful illusion, be the last cheat to leave you barer than poverty. Never," (concluded he, with great energy,)—"never will I touch again one farthing of this sum—it is yours, or it consumes this night before your eyes. Now for the security I ask—give me the honour of a man you will never play again."

The accents of the young man failed upon his lips, but the tears rolled down his cheeks, and his frame drooped by exhaustion.

"Alas! alas!" sighed he, after a labouring pause. "How am I humbled! In the sense of my own worthlessness, and before the generosity of this man, how am I humbled!"

"Humbled!" cried Elliston, with energy—"humility!—why, how is this, when I had hoped on both sides for exultation? Exultation, I confess it, on my part, that I had been able to achieve a substantial good, and exultation, still greater on yours, that you had secured the moment whilst it yet remained, to make peace with your own conscience. Will you give me the word of man?"

"Yes; and before God, my witness——"

"No—no—not that!" interposed Elliston. "I have no right with such a bond; and believe me, my friend, if the deliberate word of a deeply impressed mind should ever submit to dishonour, a more solemn contract would yet live to be despised, whilst the penalty would be multiplied a hundredfold. Give me but your word—your word of honour."

Such was the generous appeal, awakening, as may be imagined, the long abused and paralysed energies of the poor youth to whom it had been addressed. It was not made in vain; and the security which our hero had so warmly sought, was given with all the impassioned evidence of sincerity.

Elliston was of a temperament fully to enjoy that sublimation of delight, which such an adventure was so calculated to produce. His end had been accomplished; for when again visiting (strange and inconsistent as is the nature of man) the old scene of riot and dissipation,

he discovered his friend had returned no more, but had been recalled by his means to the timely task of binding up a wounded conscience, he felt a sense of happiness far surpassing any amount of his varied life. But strange and inconsistent, we repeat, as man's nature is, Elliston himself still continued to visit Blackfriars as usual, so that all traces of the past scene were soon lost in the mazes of the hazard-table.

Such, alas! was Elliston—one of those who appeared to regard righteousness, as a liberal host does his best wine, using but little of it himself and reserving his stock for the benefit of his friends.

About three months from the above event, Elliston, after an absence of two days from home, found the following letter, amongst many others, on his return to Stratford-place:—

"I am dying—from this bed of pain and anguish I can never rise. I am dying—and God knows how willingly, but for that which can alone make death terrible. If to one almost lost to hope, there could be an interval of quiet, such is the moment I pronounce, 'Bless you! God bless you, sir!' You know why I should say God bless you! An hour like mine must be past all hypocrisy, else I should but profane that justice I invoke to bless you. Hear me, sir, it is my last worldly office, and I have done. You would have rescued me from ruin—would have restored me to that, which all men, ere they die, will discover to be the only true joy on earth. For a time, shame—for it was not virtue, nor common honesty—shame guarded my steps, and baffled that fiery passion with which my neglected boyhood had grown up familiar. I did not play—avoided, fled all means of play—all place, all time, in which even danger might lie disguised. But my mind, so long estranged from honourable bent, became a void—would not be roused—'twas steeped—'twas poisoned, sir! The venom had stung my very soul to death, and I became the helpless, hopeless, despicable thing—a confessed liar! I returned to vice—I hurried to destruction—dishonoured that last, last bond, not to be sued on earth, and in pain, in poverty, in contempt, and utter desertion, I am fast, fast dying! But all will perish with me, except my disgrace! Bless you—bless you, sir! It still comforts me to say so. I shall die with it on my lips."

Deeply affected, it may well be imagined, was Elliston, on reading this distressing history. The letter had been dated three days back, from some street in Westminster, but without number of the house. Elliston went immediately, with the full determination of discovering the penitent; and though he could anticipate nothing in the meeting but of a most painful nature, yet he could not resist the desire which impelled him to the interview.

In this object he had some difficulty, for he applied at several lodging-houses without success, and had nearly given up his pursuit, when he accosted a female in the act of descending the steps of a house he had previously passed. It was here Elliston gained all his intelligence,—for it was the house in which poor L——had that morning breathed his last.*

* The substance of the incident above was communicated to the Editor of these Papers by a gentleman connected with an extensive firm in Paternoster-row—a connexion of L——'s family, who saw him frequently in his last illness.

This narrative recalls strikingly an incident in the career of King, the actor. King played deeply; and on a certain occasion he borrowed five guineas, being his last stake, with which he won two thousand pounds. Escaping from the apartment, he fell on his knees, exclaiming, in an impassioned manner, "Give me a Bible!" on which he took an oath never to play again. But the oath he kept not many months, for King afterwards became a member of the "Miles" club, in St. James's-street, where he lost everything.

At the commencement of this year (1811) Elliston had again broken fresh ground, in an entirely new project—namely, The establishment of a Literary Association at Bristol! In pursuance of which, he had purchased, for the sum of 1600*l.*, freehold premises in John-street. The house, which had formerly been an Italian warehouse, or in other words, a pickle-shop, he now opened for the sale of Italian anthology and classical conserves.

The back apartment, which he styled "The Lyceum," was accordingly thrown open, to which the whole literary mind of Bristol was invited. This was well supplied by evidences of appropriate taste—an Apollo, some Etruscan vases, Patterson's Roads, reviews, magazines, and a world of tracts, pamphlets, and newspapers. The front room was a library, or shop for the sale of "old, choice, and rare books only." Here were no idle, sickly, pale-backed bantlings of the Minerva press—nothing of the *belle assemblée* of literature whatever. Like Charles Lamb, the great projector had proclaimed Dryden and Pope the last in the empire of letters, and the "choice old books" alone constituted his care. Amongst others, he had collected "Memoirs of the Duke de Ripperda;" "Sir Thomas Double at Court;" "Enqviries tovching y^e^ Diursity of Langvages in all parts of the World;" "The Ladies' Preceptor, by a Gentleman of Honour, at Cambridge;" "The most famous, delectable, and pleasant History of Pirismvs, the renowned Prince of Bohemia;" "ΠΑΝΣΕΒΕΙΑ; or, a View of all Religions on the Earth;" "Scotiæ Indiculum; or, the Present State of Scotland, 1680;" "Chapman's Homer;" "The Ship of Fooles, in high Dutch;" "Bungey, or Dr. Sacheverell his own Executioner;" and piles on piles of "Dramatic Mysteries;" to these were added a vast variety of shells, fossils, coins, Indian weapons, and a gong, which might have awakened from their very graves a whole generation of Bristol by a single stroke.*

Elliston, who never entered with indifference on any speculation, embarked in the book scheme with more than common enthusiasm, Repeatedly as his other duties would permit, he personally peregrinated

* We may here quote the words of a learned annotator on the life and character of the eccentric John Dunton, the bookseller, as applicable to our subject:—"This dipper into a thousand books formed ten thousand projects, six hundred of which he appears to have thought he had completely methodized. But his mind seemed to be like some tables, where the victuals have been ill sorted and worse dressed. So, mutato nomine, we may apply to him the epigrammatic lines of the time—

"Here's *Elliston*, that new *dramatic* swain,
Who hatch'd six hundred projects in his brain;
The brood is large, but give him time to sit,
And he'll six hundred projects more beget."

in the collection of antique literature, frequenting innumerable book-stalls, and rummaging the back parlours and store-closets of all the good wives he could call to memory. Like the magician, in "Aladdin," he journeyed from place to place, crying "New books for old ones;" and by the end of a month he had collected poetry, like the muse herself, with but little covering; and antique bindings, on the other hand, which, like the frames of as many pictures, were "alone worth the money."

At the head of this establishment he placed a man by the name of Brick, a dilapidated schoolmaster, whose duty it was to superintend all that the great designer had brought into operation. Under these arrangements, the institution for a time flourished. The old books accumulated amazingly; for while few were read, and none sold, Elliston contemplated his stock with that sublimity of feelings estimating its value by a far higher standard than that of a scrivener, or a commercial accountant. But the city of Bristol, alas! was no genial soil for the empire of letters. The frequenters of "The Lyceum" fell off—there were few returns of either persons or profit—the "Ben Jonson's head," over the door, ceased to be oracular; and sundry outstanding demands induced our hero to think seriously of sending his literary bullion to the mint of public competition, and taking the current circulation in exchange.

But the time had now arrived, in which he received intelligence of the decisive blow of the Bristol affair. *Duns Scotus*, the shattered schoolmaster, had found time, during the latter two months, for ingratiating himself in the favour of a rope-maker's daughter, in the neighbourhood of John-street; a lady of easy manners and the same quality of virtue. Mr. Brick, like many literary men before him, was soon encompassed by the flaxen beauty; and considering, perhaps, that if he did not find her a virtuous maiden, he could at least make her an honest woman, conferred on her the distinction of Mrs. Brick, the marriage being solemnized within a stone's cast of "The Lyceum" itself. Within three days of these espousals, the history was brought to a conclusion—Mr. and Mrs. Brick had departed on a matrimonial tour, and "The Lyceum" desecrated by an eruption on the till. All was cleared, save the old choice books, for, like *Moses*, in the play, he never meddled with them. The age of reason was no more, though the schoolmaster was emphatically abroad; and the Bristol associates returned once more to their wharfs.

Elliston's object was now, of course, to get rid of the troublesome concern as quickly as possible, but in this, alas! he found equal annoyance. The title to his property, like that of many of his volumes, was found defective, under which difficulty, considerable time was lost and no inconsiderable sum sacrificed.

But the spirit and intrepidity of Elliston rose superior to his fortune. Inactivity was to him that vacuum which nature abhors, or, like the "*old gentleman* in a gale of wind," excitement was his element. A melodramatic piece was now in forwardness at the Surrey Theatre, for the purpose, in a great part, of producing two magnificent suits of armour, of the fourteenth century. Marriott, of Fleet-street, undertook the execution of the work, whose first estimate was 400*l.*, and two first-rate artizans were engaged at 12*l.* per week. Elliston, in

that peculiar vein in which he looked on all his undertakings, bound Marriott under an agreement, not to employ himself in the construction of any other armour, except on Elliston's account, for a term of five years!

Industry and enterprise now met with their full reward; for notwithstanding Elliston's great outlay by alterations, improvements, &c. in the theatre—new wardrobes, scenery, &c., he received a net profit, at the conclusion of his second season of 3000*l.**

* The Royal Circus (or Surrey Theatre) had attained, at this period, its highest celebrity, and as it may be curious to remark the rude foundations of this Transtamesin dynasty, we beg to offer the reader a brief notice. This theatre was built near the junction of the cross-road, on St. George's-fields, and opened in the year 1780, by the elder Dibdin and one Hughes, for the representation of burlettas and equestrian exercises. A spirited competition was here, for some time, maintained, with Philip Astley, proprietor of the Amphitheatre in the Westminster-road; the Circus, in fact, stimulating Astley to add a stage and scenery to his riding circle.

The Circus was burnt down in 1805. The fate of the *Pegasus*, which surmounted the building, created as much interest during the conflagration, as the *Apollo* of Drury Lane on the "one dread night" of March, 1809.

The first advertisement we offer, is in that bitterness of spirit so peculiar to dramatic rivalry:

"British Horse Academy, Blackfriars-road, Sept. 1772.

"The celebrated Sobieska Clementina and Mr. Hughes on Horseback, will end on Monday next, the 4th of October; until then they will display the whole of their Performances, which are allowed, by those who know best, to be the completest of the kind in Europe. Hughes humbly thanks the Nobility, &c. for the Honour of their Support, and also acquaints them his Antagonist has catched a bad cold so near to Westminster-bridge, and for his Recovery is gone to a warmer Climate, which is Bath in Somersetshire. He boasts, poor Fellow, no more of activity, and is now turned Conjuror, in the character of 'Sieur the Great.' Therefore Hughes is unrivalled, and will perform his surprising Feats accordingly at his Horse Academy, until the above Day. The Doors to be opened at Four o'clock, and mounts at Half-past, precisely. H. has a commodious Room, eighty feet long.—N.B. Sobieska rides on one, two, and three Horses, being the only one of her Sex that ever performed on one, two, and three."

Hughes was a fine, stalwart fellow, who could have carried an ox away on his shoulders, and eaten him for supper. The next is equally a curiosity:—

"Hughes has the Honour to inform the Nobility, &c. that he has no intention of setting out every Day to France for three following Seasons, his Ambition being fully satisfied by the applause he has received from Foreign Gentlemen who come over the Sea to See him. Clementina and Miss Huntly ride one, two, and three Horses at full Speed, and takes Leaps surprising. A little Lady, only Eight Years old, rides Two Horses at full gallop, by herself, without the assistance of any one to hold her on. Enough to put any one in Fits to see her. H. will engage to ride in Twenty Attitudes that never were before attempted; in particular, he will introduce his Horse of Knowledge, being the only wise animal in the Metropolis. A Sailor in full gallop to Portsmouth, without a bit of Bridle or Saddle. The Macaroni Tailor riding to Paris for new Fashions. This being Mr. Pottinger's night, he will speak a Prologue adapted to the noble art of Riding, and an Epilogue also suited to Extraordinary Leaps. Tickets (2s.) to be had of Mr. Wheble, bookseller, Paternoster-row, and at H.'s Riding School. Mounts half-past four."

Again:—

"Hughes, with the celebrated Sobieska Clementina, the famous Miss Huntly, and an astonishing Young Gentleman (son of a Person of Quality) will exhibit at Blackfriars-road more extraordinary things than ever yet witnessed, such as leaping over a Horse forty times without stopping between the Springs.—Leaps the Bar standing on the Saddle with his Back to the Horse's Tail, and *vice versâ*—Rides at full speed with his right Foot on the Saddle and his left Toe in his Mouth, two surprising Feet. Mrs. Hughes takes a fly and fires a Pistol—rides at full Speed standing on Pint Pots—mounts pot by pot, higher still, to the terror of all who see her. H. carries a lady at full speed over his head—surprising! The

In the meantime, Rowland Hill, like a holy crusader, hovered about the Saracenic armies of the mighty Saladin, and St. George's-fields were again awakened to rescue the land from the infidels. The chapel being erected, the divine renewed his thunders against the playhouse. Sunday after Sunday he discoursed on the sinfulness of stage exhibitions—sometimes mentioning Elliston by name, and not unfrequently detailing the very plots of dramatic productions, the more intimately to illustrate the just spirit of his denunciation. It was on one of these occasions that Rowland Hill repeated the following, from his well-known "Aphoristic Observations":—"The Reverend James Harvey being one day on a journey, a lady, who happened to be in the same carriage with him, was expatiating in a very particular manner on the amusements of the stage, as being, in her esteem, superior to any other pleasures. Among other things, she said, there was the pleasure of thinking on the play before she went, the pleasure she enjoyed when there, and the pleasure of ruminating upon it when in her bed at night. Mr. Harvey, when she had concluded, said to her in a mild manner, that there was one pleasure, besides what she had mentioned, that she had forgot. 'What can that be?' said she, 'for sure I have included every pleasure, when I have considered the enjoyment before-hand, at the time, and afterwards. Pray, sir, what is it?' To which Mr. Harvey, with a grave look, and *in a manner peculiar to himself*, answered, 'Madam, the pleasure it will give you on your death-bed.' A clap of thunder, or a flash of lightning, could not have struck her with more surprise—the blow pierced to her very heart, and *she never went any more to the playhouse, but became a pious woman for ever afterwards!*"

"Hence gloomy bigots vilify the stage,
And hand the libel down from age to age."

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young gentleman will recite verses of his own making, and act 'Mark Antony,' between the Leaps. Clementina every night.—A commodious Room for the Nobility."

We will now take at random, a bill of Philip Astley, the despised of Hughes and Clementina, but the formidable rival to the Blackfriars' establishment:—

"Astley's, Westminster-bridge, this and every evening. HORSEMANSHIP, by Mr. Astley, Mr. Taylor, Signior Markutchy, Miss Vangable, and other transcendent performers. This performance will be commenced by a new MINUET, danced by two HORSES, in a most extraordinary manner.

"A Comical Musical Piece, called THE AWKWARD RECRUIT.

"The Amazing Exhibition of THE DANCING DOGS, from France and Italy, and other genteel parts of the globe, consisting of—1. Two Dogs as Chairmen, carrying a Monkey to a Masquerade. 2. Two Dogs disputing politicks. 3. A Company of Dogs carrying from a Vineyard Baskets of Grapes, and accompanied by a Savoyard, with a Magic Lanthorn. 4. A Dog as a Lady of Quality in her equipage, attended by others in elegant liveries. 5. A Dog Cobbling. 6. A Dog that walks on any two of his legs. 7. Two Dogs, as a Tumbler, and his attendant Clown. 8. A Dog dressed in a Spanish habit, taking another little dog to a boarding-school; with a variety of others too numerous for insertion. This Exhibition will conclude with a variety of Dogs dressed *en militaire*, besieging a Town; one of them represents a Corporal returning with the Colours of the Citadel in his mouth to his General; he halts on three legs, being supposed to have received a musket-ball in one of his fore-feet. Two Bull-Dogs; the English Bull-Dog, rather than quit his hold, suffers himself to be drawn Thirty Feet high, whilst the machine is surrounded with Fire Works, representing a heavy discharge of small arms and artillery.

"TUMBLING, and other unaccountable EXERCISES, by Signor Bellmott.

"To which will be added a New Pantomime, called HARLEQUIN PUZZLE 'EM."

JOHN MANESTY,

The Liverpool Merchant.

BY THE LATE WILLIAM MAGINN, LL.D.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE CONFESSION.

MANESTY speedily returned to his room, there to ruminate alone on what he had heard. Strange to say, his first impulse was to laugh aloud.

"Poor Ozias, how he must have been shocked! The killing of Blazes was of course, in his eyes, matter of less enormity than the old seaman habit of rapping out an oath, which I could not repress myself from using on the instant. Far less were all the enormities of Hoskins than the scoffs, which even he must have perceived I was flinging upon the dearest gods of his idolatry. I feel myself relieved of a load, as was the Sailor Sindbad, when he flung off from his shoulders the galling oppression of the Old Man of the Sea. It was to come sooner or later, and I am glad that I have broken the ice with Rheinenberger. Why should I tie myself down to this wearying life of dull drudgery—this sickening and hypocritical assumption of a character for which, perhaps, there never was any need; but for which there is now assuredly none whatever. I shall put an end to it to-day. This prying impertinence of Oglethorpe is beyond doubt, a *contretemps*, which just now I should wish had not occurred. Pish! what matter—it is a twenty or a fifty pound affair at most to smother. It will soon stench itself out. If anything be annoying in the investigations, which may arise, I can easily retire for a moment. A week ago, I announced on 'Change that I was again bound, at this my usual time, for the West Indies;—when I return, who will think of this folly. When I return! Is that ever to be? Perhaps not. Sometimes I am weak enough to believe that omens and portents are gathering round me, and that my career is coming to its close. And a face haunts me with a look of puzzling remembrance. Is it because I—pooh! was that the only one?"

He "pished," and "poohed," with much vehemence; but did not seem by such means to recover his equanimity.

"It is all nonsense," said he at last; "I have business of more moment to attend to. I must go to old Hibblethwaite's room, and see if there is anything there that ought to be put away. Shuckleborough," said he, emerging from his private room, and putting on his coat, "go to Weston, and tell my attorney, Varnham, to wait for me at home all day—the hour of my calling on him will be uncertain; but let him be in the way, whatever it may be."

He left the counting-house, and Robin never saw him more! He was fond of telling, in the few remaining years of his life, that he had never before noticed Master John so much elated—that his figure seemed to swell—his tall height to be drawn to its uttermost—his voice as it were to chuckle with delight—and his eyes to gleam with a fiery

lustre that almost frightened his obsequious dependent. He strode out of the office gaily and flauntingly, and something like the humming of an air burst upon Shuckleborough's astonished ear. "In after days," he said, "he thought him possessed, and that it boded some ill," adducing various *ad libitum* dreams, and other indications of coming evil. At the time, if the truth were to be told, he thought that Rheinenberger had communicated to "the governor" some tidings of good fortune, which was to be duly ratified and confirmed by his friend Ezekiel Varnham, whom he complimented in thought as one of the sharpest hands in the duchy, and justly complimented, too, if the words, "sharp hand," be synonymous with "unscrupulous rogue."

When Manesty gained the room which was known by the name of his late partner, he carefully locked himself in, and proceeded to open and scrupulously examine the chests. He had ascertained beforehand that the door, which in fact did lead to the lumber-room below, was secure. He felt certain that no intruder could break in upon his privacy, and he bestowed much time, care, and patience upon the task of examination and selection, which seemed to be in his eyes a matter of all-absorbing interest. While he was thus occupied, a loud and impetuous knocking was heard at the front door of the room, to which at first he paid no attention whatever, but proceeded silently on his business. It was, however, more vehemently repeated; and on his continuing not to answer, the voice of his nephew, tremulous with emotion, reached his ear.

"It is no use, uncle," said Hugh; "I know you are in the room, and I must, and will see you."

"I am much occupied now, Hugh," was the answer, "and do not want to be intruded upon. In less than an hour, I shall be at the house in Pool-lane; and then I am at your service."

"But it is now—now, this moment, sir, that I want you," said Hugh, in frantic accents, speaking through the door—"a moment is not to be lost—it is matter of life and death."

"Humph!" muttered Manesty, hastily gathering up the articles he had taken from the chests, replacing them with hurried hand, and again securing them under their padlocks. "Some love-caper about the Stanleys, I presume; but the sooner I admit him, the sooner I get rid of him.—Wait a moment, Hugh, I shall open the door at once."

He was as good as his word; and on the instant that the barrier was removed, Hugh bounded into the apartment. Some unusual feeling had distorted his tranquil features into the mingled emotions of bursting rage and scarcely suppressed grief; and, with an abruptness which he had never before ventured to assume towards his stern relation, he rushed into the question at once, which had driven him to invade his uncle's privacy.

"Sir," said he, "I am about to commit what I know is a crime by the laws of man, and a sin by the ordinances of God; but I must do it—I cannot draw back."

"I may as well relock the door," said Manesty, "if you intend carrying on a conversation which promises to be so ticklish, in such a voice." He did so, accordingly, casting a scrutinizing glance upon his nephew, strongly indicative that he considered the young man's sanity rather doubtful.

"It is no need, sir," said Hugh; "for the affair is, or at least

speedily will be, known all over Liverpool and Lancashire. I have challenged Colonel Stanley to a duel, and we are to meet in an hour's time, or rather less, by Wavertree."

"It is, indeed, most sinful and absurd," said Manesty; "but why——"

"I have no time, sir, to listen to truisms which I could utter without prompting. It must be, and there's an end. The quarrel is this —I came up with the Stanleys this morning from Eaglemont, a couple of hours ago, and we stopped at her cousin's house, by the new gardens of Toxteth Park. The colonel does not like me or mine, and he has insinuated many an underhand insult which I pretended not to notice, because—no matter why. It is no time for concealment now, uncle; but there is everything but a solemn engagement of marriage between Mary Stanley and me——"

"Speak not of that," said his uncle; "I have long known it, and seriously thought about it. Of that hereafter. What about Colonel Stanley? The young man is deeply embarrassed, and it may be that I know where he applied for unreasonable assistance."

"He left us, then, in Toxteth Park, and in an hour or thereabouts, returned much chafed at something I know not what. I had remained with the young lady, and he rushed into the room, and without regarding her presence, directed the most injurious language towards me. He said that he had found out the secret of the wealth of our house—that it was all the produce of piracy and murder—that you were nothing more than a notorious pirate, who took advantage of your ill-gotten wealth to insult highborn men to whom you ought not to aspire to be a footman, by casting discredit on their honour; and that there could be no doubt that you flung the sailor into the river to get rid of his testimony."

"And then?"

"And then Miss Stanley, whose ears not even a rumour of these slanders had reached, looked at me, and frightened by my angry looks, I suppose, immediately fainted. I rang for her servant to take care of her, and called him out into the lawn, where I dared him to repeat his words, which he did with many aggravations of insult. I instantly told him he lied, and he struck me. In the affray that followed I had not the worse; and he was nearly overpowered when the servants parted us. But still I have received outrageous affront actually in the presence, and a blow almost in the presence, certainly with the knowledge, of a lady——"

"Whom it seems you love more than common sense or common reason. Could you not read the riddle of all this? George Stanley has been of late more than usually unlucky, as these silly fellows call themselves, when they run open-mouthed to be robbed at the betting-stand or gaming-board; and I know that he was vainly endeavouring to negotiate some desperate discounts with my broker, Shuckleford, which were peremptorily declined to-day, and he connects me somehow with the refusal. The blow, however, *is* bad. But have not you employed our sturdy old Lancashire method of wiping it out already by vigorously using those arms which nature has bestowed?"

"I did my best in that way," replied the nephew; "but it is not the fit method after all. And as the colonel is beyond question a first-rate shot, and a capital swordsman, I cannot with any honour refuse

to follow up the challenge. Why I came to you, dear uncle, is this. Duels are not always fatal, and explanations often bring them to a bloodless conclusion. I thirst not for the blood of George Stanley—call a dog by that name, and I should love it—and shall be found ready to listen to anything pacific that will not compromise my character as a gentleman. What terms shall I impose to make him retract the injurious words—the abominable insinuations, he addressed towards you? The insult to myself I can have no difficulty in arranging."

"You think, then," said Manesty, looking full in the young man's face, "that duelling is criminal and sinful, and only to be justified, or rather to be palliated, by supposed necessities of each individual case."

"Such is my opinion," replied Hugh.

"The justice of the individual case ought, then," said his uncle, slowly, "to be a principal element in deciding on what is to be adduced as palliation or defence."

"Undoubtedly."

"It is but a shadow of the trial by combat, in the middle ages," continued Manesty; "and even in those dark and barbarous days they supposed that it was necessary to have truth on the side of him who claimed the wager of battle. Should it not be so still?"

"Of course. I am not so superstitious as to imagine that in the old judicial combats death proved guilt or false accusation against the defeated champion—or victory vindicated the innocence of the conqueror, or established the justice of his charge. In modern duels, we do little more than risk a life to comply with the etiquette exacted by the world; but still it is infinitely disgraceful to maintain a quarrel in any manner unless you imagine you have right on your side. In the case of a fatal result, under contrary circumstances, I should little envy the feelings of the survivor. It would be hard to distinguish his act from a murder."

"Which the law calls it in any case. Hugh—I wish you not to fight this duel—I never could worse spare you than now. You know not the projects I have in my mind, nor the variety of struggles I have made for your advancement in the world—for realizing your most cherished hopes—ay, even that which is now most busily throbbing in your heart."

"But, uncle, I cannot avoid it," said the young man, passionately. "I might submit to an affront directed against myself——"

"I doubt it much," thought his uncle.

"But when it is directed against you—you, by whom my unprotected infancy was reared and cherished—who have loaded me with kindness, and heaped me with favours—made me,—me, a poor deserted orphan, with no claims upon you but such as would be neglected by nine men out of ten,—a participator in your hard-earned wealth, the fruit of your own toil and talent, your patience and your self-denial—and such an affront, too—why, sir, I should have kennel-water, not blood in my veins, if I did not resent it!"

Manesty looked on the handsome and excited youth with glistening, but not undelighted eyes, as he poured out these energetic words. Some busy feelings appeared to be at work in his bosom; but he was silent. Hugh thought he had gained an advantage; and as his uncle did not speak, he proceeded, after a short pause.

"And offered, too, in the presence of a lady—to be dishonoured in whose eyes is to me a worse agony than death—I cannot, uncle—it must go on."

"It may be in many ways prevented," said Manesty, "without dishonour to either party. As for me, the words of such a bullying swindler as yon broken blackleg pass by me as the idle wind. What he has said affects me not. I can protect myself from his slanders, if I deem it necessary, in a way that he will consider more serious than the pulling of a score of triggers. Take, therefore, no heed for me. You have spoken affectionately of my care, dear Hugh. May not the man, of whom you have thus spoken, demand that a proof of your affection should be shewn. If I have been a protector of your childhood, let me be a protector of your manhood. You have told me that George Stanley is a keen shot, of that I do not much reck; for I have known that keen shots have not unfrequently missed when the object before the pistolled poltroon is not a pistolless partridge. So much for me. As for the lady, may I not ask you, is not she trembling this very moment?—would she not give all that is dearest to her to prevent this affair from coming to blood? The man to whom you profess deep obligation—the woman to whom you are linked, in what you imagine endless love—both equally acquit you of all obligation. Fight not this duel, dear Hugh—leave it to me, and, if you like, to Miss Stanley, with me to arrange. Fear not any disgrace from the result. I know, as you have said, that George Stanley is master of any weapon, which he will employ, and that he will unscrupulously use his skill. And to lose you now—Oh, God! If we were in—but no matter. I peremptorily forbid this duel."

"It is not in your power, uncle," replied Hugh—"your peremptoriness comes too late. You then will not tell me what I can say to the colonel, beyond a flat denial of his insolent slander?"

"Stay," returned Manesty; "it *is* in my power to stop you, and that effectually. But before I do it, pause for a moment, and take my word for it, without inquiry, that you will find I am right in saying I have such power. One short sentence of mine checks this insane quarrel. Do not urge me to speak it—take my word that I can do what I say."

"I cannot, dear uncle,—I cannot. The time is rapidly approaching, and I must be punctual to the minute."

"You compel me then to speak," said Manesty, "that which you will sadly repent ever having heard. Suppose what Colonel Stanley said was perfectly true?"

"Is true? Impossible! Do not I, who have dwelt under your roof—know it to be impossible?" cried the young man, turning deadly pale, nevertheless, and sinking upon one of the sea-chests which stood by the office-desk. "Good God! do you mean to say that you are connected with slavers and pirates?"

"The contents of that chest, on which you are sitting, would supply you with ample information on that point. I AM."

"A fearful suspicion has sometimes come over my thoughts," replied Hugh, "when I found our profits so unaccountably increasing, but nothing of this. Am I then to have the misery of being obliged to ask—if you are in any way identified with that desperate, who is called Dick Hoskins?"

"Identified, indeed!" was the stern and dogged answer—"for I AM THE MAN!"

"Gracious heavens! and the sailor Blazes——"

"Was flung into the river Mersey, by this hand!" said Manesty, with perfect composure. "Nay, bury not your face in your hands, but gather up your senses, while I proceed in the work, which you disturbed; and when you have again scraped them together, it will be time for you to think of pursuing this duel, with all its honourable accompaniments."

Hugh sank into something like a swoon, but soon recovered; and found his uncle quietly writing at his desk.

"Is this mockery, or truth?" he gasped forth, in tones which agony had rendered almost inarticulate.

"Truth!" returned Manesty. "I have commanded the 'Bloody Juno,' for the last three years, personally, as I had done five-and-twenty years ago. I commanded it by proxy during all the years of the interval."

"And the dreadful stories—the burning of the Spaniards alive in the Podestà?"

"Was an accident—we never intended it."

"And the killing of the boat's crew, off the coast of Brazil?"

"Was no accident; but they richly deserved it. There was not a man among them that did not deserve to be hanged ten times over."

"And the——"

"Do not frighten yourself by pursuing the catalogue. Many things, quite as bad as these, were done, though the worst matters were done when Tristram Fiennes commanded, and his life was the forfeit. His crew, tired of his cruelty, murdered him off Anamaboo, three years ago, when, as nobody could be trusted to manage a body of desperadoes in the mutinous state which followed this affair, I was obliged to go myself. The business of Brooklyn Royal was a mere flam—I sold it out and out, on my first trip across the Atlantic, and never set foot in Jamaica again."

Hugh was so stupified, that he scarcely heard what his uncle was saying; but he well recollected the name of Tristram Fiennes, and the letter which announced his death—its agitating effect on Manesty—and his hasty departure for the West Indies so speedily following.

"Good heavens!" said he, at last, starting up, "am I doomed to have such a demon for an uncle!"

"Does it grieve you, then, that I am your uncle? If you knew the truth, that cause of grief would be removed. It has been an imposture, on my part, all through. I am *not* your uncle."

The eyes of the young man were instantly flashing with beams of joy.

"You are not my uncle, thou blood-stained man! Your deeds towards me have been such that I can never meditate harm towards you. But, oh! what a weight you have taken off my heart! God be praised, I am not of your kin. You are, then, not my uncle? Say it again."

"I will," said Manesty, laying his hand upon the youth's shoulder, who recoiled with horror from the touch. "The truth must come at last—I am *not* your uncle—I *am* your father!"

"My father!" exclaimed the frantic young man—"my father! Oh, God! Here, then, I part with this accursed house and its dreadful owner for ever. Is this only a horrid dream?"

"Not so easily parted as you imagine. You will not kick down that iron door; those who put up its bolts and stancheons wrought it not so as to be spurned down with naked fist or foot. Stay but for a moment. You will find full particulars of my career, and your own history in this paper. Put it in your pocket; and having read it, think whether you are to meet George Stanley or not. I knew that the religious rubbish I broached was nothing but despicable nonsense; but I knew well that I could prevent the duel by a word. Will you meet him now?"

"Open the door, sir, and that's all—all!" exclaimed Hugh. "Let me loose from this den of horrors. George Stanley is safe from me."

"I thought so. Of other matters, we'll talk when you are in calmer mood," said his father, for so we must now call him, opening the door, through which his son rushed, in headlong desperation.

"I must look ahead, in good earnest," said Manesty, returning to his desk, after he had locked the door. "The game will soon be up; but I shall take care of him, nevertheless."

QUIN AND THE GHOST.

BY UNCLE SAM.

In the year 1743,—exactly one century ago,—and in the month of March, the celebrated comedian, James Quin, together with his friend Lacy Ryan, (afterwards joint lessee with David Garrick of Drury Lane Theatre,) were riding on horseback, debating as to the hostelry at which they would put up. "There's a pretty comfortable house near at hand," observed Quin, "one at which I have frequently passed a few days; but the landlord scores thirteen to the dozen, and I *did* say I would never patronise the rogue again. But I don't know that we could do better: he keeps a capital farm-yard, and his wife sees that everything is cooked to a turn." Ryan did not reply to this, as he was chuckling at the certainty that Quin would never pass a house where the eating department was so unexceptionable. A turn in the road soon brought the horsemen to the Dover suburbs, and at the end of the first row of cottages stood two houses, one of which professed, on a large swinging sign, to have "good entertainment for man and horse."

"This is the place I was speaking of," said Quin, as he gave the reins of his steed to the ostler, and (not doubting the entire consent of Ryan to everything he should determine) ordered the two horses into the stable. Lacy Ryan was, at this period, a quiet, easy-tempered gentleman, one-third poet and two-thirds comedian and tragedian; but when in company with Quin, on any excursion, he always played an inferior part, looking upon Quin pretty much in the same light as Boswell did upon Johnson. The superior hero of the mimic art, after giving a glance into the stable, observed, in a complimentary manner,

that he was sure his dear friend Lacy would see that both horses had fair play in the manger, and forthwith strode into the first apartment of the inn, a bar-room and kitchen combined.

In this apartment were the landlord—half farmer, half waiter—and his wife, who was reading a London newspaper about ten days old, both of whom knew Quin by personal remembrance, and made their best bow and curtsey.

"Landlord," said Quin, "the more I come to this house, the more disagreeable I find it. You seem to be terribly troubled with rats: one of the villains crossed me at the threshold, and I saw two or three in the stable. How is it you swarm in this manner?"

"Why, sir," replied Boniface, "the drains from the house run into the homestead for farm purposes, and the scents of the kitchen attract the rats."

"Scents of the kitchen, eh?" responded Quin. "Who would have thought the rats had so much sense? But I'll suggest a remedy. The first time you catch one, send him in a bill as heavy as the one you sent *me* in the last time I was here, and they'll never trouble your house again."

"I'm sorry," quoth the landlady, "that any gentleman should have to make such a remark."

"I have experienced the same feeling," replied Quin. "And pray, madam, what is there in the newspaper?"

"Nothing," answered the landlady.

"Then be so kind as to relate it," retorted Quin.

"Why really, sir, I can remember nothing but that it says there are more women in the world than men."

"What can be the reason of that?" observed the landlord.

"It's quite in conformity with all the arrangements of nature," replied Quin, making a very pleasant, genteel-comedy bow to the landlady, who was agreeable enough to look at, "we always see more of heaven than earth."

The landlady made a move, and called the cook, the compliment being quite lost on her. The cook came in, looking as cross-gartered as cooks generally look. The theory on which this observation is founded would require an essay on caloric and fumigation to exemplify.

"Cook," inquired Quin, "can you manage a *fricasee à la Français?*"

"Don't understand any French lingo," replied the cook. "I was never out of Old England, or out of Kent either."

"That is very extraordinary," observed Quin: "I should have thought you had been several times over Grease."

"Neither Greece nor Rome," retorted the maiden by courtesy; "I was never ten miles from Dover in all my born days."

"Oh, cookey, cook!—*that* must be a mistake, for a year ago I saw you at *Spithead.*"

"I defy the imperation, sir."

"Well, do; and toast yourself in a glass of the best Hollands before the fire after you cook my dinner. Landlady," added Quin, as he walked out of the kitchen, "I want dinner for two, but you may bring it for three if you will. Let us have everything worth eating the house contains. We will try to be satisfied if you are short of everything but soup, fish, flesh, and fowl."

The next house to the inn where Quin and his fellow-traveller put

up was occupied by a small farmer of curious character; a man out of his element; one who would have succeeded better in a city than a village—a rural genius. He was always plotting and contriving, pushing himself into small notice, attending vestries and snubbing the vicar, getting into law and quarrelling with his lawyer, fishing in the squire's trout-stream without leave, and stopping his majesty's mail, as it passed by his house, when any important news was expected, by blowing a cracked French horn, and thus frightening the horses and driver. He frequented the large kitchen of the room next door, and had taken it into his head that the innkeeper ought to remove, and allow him to succeed to the lesseeship; and thereupon he began to plot and contrive, talked of opening his own house as an inn, or building a new one opposite; and even went so far as to have a sign painted, announcing to the equestrian of retired habits that, instead of putting up at the regular hostelry, he could obtain "hay and oats" next door. The innkeeper had given several indications of a latent desire to remove into the town of Dover when his lease should expire, and the village genius was thus "pricking the sides of his intent." The innkeeper, however, was a slow mover, and the genius became out of patience, and set his wits further to work. Happening to hear the innkeeper's wife express a very decided belief in ghosts, he determined forthwith to haunt the inn with the ghost of a traveller who had died in a room on the second floor. In pursuit of this arduous undertaking, he knocked out some bricks which separated one of his own apartments from the large chimney of the room in the next house where the deceased traveller had breathed his last, and in the dead of the night crept through this ingenious contrivance, and walked the floor with boots on, in a measured tread so accurately descriptive of the heavy, lumbersome footsteps of a *bonâ-fide* ghost, that the innkeeper and his wife were duly and truly alarmed. From the commencement of this trick, only one traveller had been shewn in to sleep in the haunted bed-chamber, and this gentleman, a button-maker of Birmingham, was affrighted into fits by seeing, "with his own eyes," (and therefore he could not be mistaken,) the ghost in a dowlas winding-sheet, holding a scooped turnip in his hand, inside of which burnt a small candle! From that period the room was denuded of its bed, and given up to the ghost during the night; but in the daytime was occasionally used for meetings on parish and road matters, and an occasional dinner, when the other rooms of the house were full of guests.

When Lacy Ryan had seen the horses despatch their meal without assistance from the honest ostler, he walked after Quin into the house, and was shewn into a pretty large room on the second floor, where he found the great actor seated by the side of a huge fire-place waiting for dinner.

"Well, Ryan, are the horses safe, my boy?" inquired Quin.

"Quite safe, and had their meal."

"And the stage waits for ours. Are they safe from horse-stealers? Is there a good man-trap and a dog?"

"Aye, both. A dog that puts me in mind of David Ross, of Covent Garden."

"Why, Lacy—why? Give us your comical reason, you comical dog."

"Because he's so fat."

"Ha, ha! Ross is a fat dog, to be sure. The last time I saw him he was playing George Barnwell, and looked like a porpoise. 'Ross,' said I, 'your playing of this part ought to be indicted by the Court of Aldermen. George Barnwell, an apprentice, indeed! Why, you're fat enough to be Lord Mayor of London.'"

"Didn't he threaten, in his usual playful manner, to pull you by the nose?"

"He never passes those jokes upon James Quin, sir; he knows his man better."

"He thinks you have such a right to be generous, that you may *give* without being affronted by an offer to *take*."

"'The satirical rogue, says ——' 'Pshaw, what is it? Mere trash.' Talking of pulling noses puts me in mind of Captain Poynx: he had his nose pulled at the Shakspeare Tavern the other night, and, instead of resenting the affront as a man of honour, he came to me to ask how he could best put up with it. 'Why, sir,' said I, 'soap your nose the next time you go into company, and the pullers will slip their hold.' But here comes the damask, the cue for dinner. The brute beasts have had their due, my boy!"

"Oh, I'll warrant it. Had I not remained, they would have had more dew than would have been good for them. The rascally ostler was going to keep them in the open air while he ran on an errand, and the dew was becoming quite dense, as the sun had already dipped in the west."

"'Dipped in the west,' eh, Mr. Poet? Where should the sun dip, and when should the dew rise?"

"Not such a bad line that as to be overlooked, Mr. Quin. Allow me to cap it?"

"Certainly, my boy, if it'll do you any good; only don't take away *my* appetite."

"*Where should the sun dip, and when should the dew rise?*
When the absence of Phœbus brings tears from the skies."

"It wont do—it wont do. The skies are not a row of young ladies, to weep when their favourite rover drives his phaeton out of sight. But here comes dinner; cap that if you can."

It had now become very late for a dinner in the olden time. Candles were lighted, and the two brothers of the sock and buskin sat down to an excellent repast—"Dinner and supper rolled into one," as Quin observed. Quin, whose renown as a gourmand has almost outlived his fame as an actor, was so silent, as to impose the same contemplative repose of speech on his friend. Dinner despatched, claret was brought in, and as soon as Quin was evidently relishing his wine and olives, Lacy Ryan thought it was high time to break silence.

"Why don't you marry, take a house, and set up an equipage?" observed Ryan.

"I carry a coach and a dinner always in my pocket," replied Quin. "I can either take the number, or turn off my cook, whenever I please; and as to a wife, lord, Ryan! if I were to marry the best cook in England, she'd be sitting in the drawing-room before the honeymoon was half over. I was as good as married a short time once, and understand the sex, I flatter myself; but that was in my junior days, when I filled myself full of hope, and very little else; when I was a

youngster in old Tag-rag's company at Ipswich, getting rid of my clothes, dining upon a waistcoat, sleeping on my linen, and breakfasting on a pair of stockings. The rest of the company used to live on angling, but *I* couldn't get either bite or sup that way; the diversion of the diverting dogs was too barbarous for *my* taste."

"Do you really think angling a barbarous diversion, Mr. Quin?"

"Do I? Marry, yes! Suppose some superior being should bait a hook with venison, and go a Quinning,—I should certainly bite, and what a sight *I* should be dangling in the air!"

"That would be 'flesh fishified,' truly, as Hamlet observes. Talking of Hamlet puts me in mind of *my* tragedy."

"Does it? How one thing should lead to the other, however, would pass the wit of mortal man to conceive."

"I wish you would advise me what to do with it?"

"Marry, will I. Blot out one half of it, and burn the other."

"Davy Garrick keeps me down terribly: I don't see why I shouldn't play Hamlet."

"But Garrick does; and I suppose *I* could if I were to try."

"'To be, or not to be, that is the question.'"

"No question at all, upon my honour!"

"He might let me play the ghost, then."

As Ryan finished this observation, a very ghostly groan from the chimney made the two actors start and look at each other in the well-known attitude descriptive of the interrogation—*What's that?*"

"There's a fellow in the chimney," observed Quin, speaking very low, "coming to murder us—robbery—all that sort of thing. Ring the bell, Lacy." The bell sounded, and the landlord appeared.

"Landlord," muttered Quin, "there's some murdering thief in the chimney! Have the kindness to remove him, and bring us a fresh bottle of claret."

"In the chimney!" responded the host. "O lor, sir! it's the ghost!"

"Oh, only a ghost is it!" observed Quin, who began to suspect the landlord of a guilty connexion with some intended plot. "Well, sir, if you've planted a ghost there, you can order him down."

The landlord then related all he knew on the subject, and offered to shew the gentleman into another room; but this was immediately opposed. Quin, satisfied that some trick was being played off, stated his intention to see it performed, and raising his voice for the instruction of the ghost, if within hearing, ordered the landlord to bring in two beds, for that they would sleep in that room; and then added, in a lower tone, "I was speaking to the ghost. Now an aside. Give me your ear, and put yourself in an attentive attitude, looking towards the front row of the lower boxes. Get me a fire lighted in my old room, facing the poultry-yard. Bring in an additional recruit of wine or spirits: let it be a *magnum bonum* of brandy, and none of your *small* cruets. We must despatch this said ghost of yours, or perhaps it will be a troublesome guest when we are asleep; and when we have laid the fellow in the Red Sea, it will be time to go to bed."

The landlord soon appeared with the *magnum bonum*.

"Now we are prepared," observed Lacy. "Brandy *versus* ghost. I'll back the spirit in the bottle for a thousand pounds."

"Not quite prepared," whispered Quin. "We must load and

prime the pistols, as well as ourselves." Quin suited the action to the word, and then commenced brewing a jorum of hot brandy and water.

"Talking of ghosts," remarked Quin, "I saw old General Guise the other day, at a picture sale, and thought it was his ghost, for I had heard he was dead. Such a magnificent fellow as he used to be! He is now shrunk as thin almost as a man's own ghost. Garrick pointed him out; and I said it was impossible; but I put on my spectacles, and sure enough it was the old General. However, to annoy little Davy, I said, 'I'm right; Guise has been dead these two years; but it seems he has got a day-rule to see the pictures, and has come out *dis*-Guised.'"

"Very good indeed, Mr. Quin. Now, pray give me your real opinion of my tragedy. Do you think there are *many* men who could produce such a drama as mine?"

"Ay, sir, many men, many women, and many children."

"You seem to be in a very contradictory humour, Mr. Quin."

"Not at all. I'll bet you a cool crown you approve of the very next thing I say."

"Done, for a crown; for if I do approve of it, perhaps it may be worth the money. What is it?"

"Why, Mister Lacy Ryan, your modesty will not intimate as much to yourself; but it is shrewdly suspected you are the greatest genius in England."

"Well, I've lost my wager, and have scarcely gained an equivalent for my money. The compliment was not worth half a crown."

"It is worth one side of a crown, as a one-sided compliment, giving you a little information. Now in earnest, Lacy. You know I'm your sincere friend. I could hire a fellow for a shilling to damn your tragedy the first night."

"How so?"

"Why, if I have read your plot aright, you have two brothers fighting for a deceased monarch's crown; and in the last scene, when the princesses, the grand vizier, and the three blacks are lying dead, you cause the brothers to make up their differences, by one of them observing, that in future they would share the crown between them. Now, at that identical moment, I would have a fellow in the pit to get up, and say, 'That's just half-a-crown a-piece for you, my bucks.' The laugh would come in *there*, and your fine tragedy be converted into a farce. But where is this same ghost?" added Quin, in a low tone of voice; "it will be well to put out the candles, and pretend to be asleep. The fire affords us light enough to take aim with a pistol."

No sooner said than done. Quin blew out the lights, and in a few minutes began to snore with great propriety of modulation.

The ingenious gentleman, who pleased himself with the true performance of the ghost, after groaning through the aperture in the manner previously recorded, proceeded to the bar-room of the inn, to hear what sensation his most sweet and ghostly voice had succeeded in producing. "The ghost is a-yelling again!" exclaimed the landlord; "but the two gentlemen have ordered brandy, and say they wish to see the spirit. One of 'em is a play-actor, as bold as a lion, and the other's no better, I reckon. They care naught about ghosts, or demons either, with fire coming out of their mouths, and filled brimful of sulphur. They'll be a-going to sleep presently; and if the ghost really

don't trouble 'em, I shall be a-thinking there beant ever a rale ghost, but only a——a——"

"No rale ghost!" observed the ghost himself. "Why, you're not a *reist*, are you? No ghost! What could yell, and groan, and moan, and walk over the flure with an underground tread, and look so white and unarthly-like, as this here ghost of yourn do, but a rale ghost?"

"Very true; the room is certainly haunted; and I wish I were well out of the house."

At this, the village genius chuckled, and thought, that if he could that night impose upon the play-actor and his companion, he could have the inn at a low rent. He then determined to execute a grand performance; and proceeding to the room which adjoined, by means of the chimney, the apartment where Quin and Ryan were seated, he commenced operations, by ascertaining what sort of a fire was kept up, and what were the positions of the two gentlemen. He found the fire in the large chimney would not at all incommode his descent into the room, the chimney-place being of the old-fashioned commodious kind, calculated for burning wood; and he was hugely delighted, by hearing the snore of Quin, who, having the patience of a horse in harness, was persevering in his laudable determination of humbugging the ghost.

The juggling village spirit commenced proceedings by a terrific groan through the chimney, to which Quin and his companion did not answer a word. He then dressed himself in his winding-sheet, lighted his turnip-lantern, chalked his face, corked his eyelids, and proceeded to get through the aperture. The noise of this exploit was very audible to Quin, and in a minute he sprang up, fired a pistol, and ordered Ryan to light the candles. The departed spirit was taken before he had made good his appearance in character; and, when down on his knees before Quin, looked—so chapfallen was he—more like the ghost of an impostor than a spirited ghost of the supernatural world.

"Look, you villain!" shouted Quin, in the tragic tone, seizing another pistol from the table, and placing the muzzle at the head of the interloper, "if you do not instantly acknowledge yourself to be one of the human species, I'll make a ghost of you in earnest!"

The noise of the first pistol alarmed the house: the landlord and all his dependents soon rushed into the room, and beheld the dispirited ghost in a very pitiable condition, begging on his knees for life.

"This is a more sensible ghost, Mr. Landlord, than you took him to be," said Quin; "he has only premeditated our fright, and finding no success, he gives in, and cries quarter."

The remainder of this scene may be easily imagined. The ghost had to run the gauntlet through the inn; and Quin and Ryan retired to bed, determined to leave the place the next day, before the ghost could contrive any means of human revenge. On the following morning, therefore, the horses were called out, and on mounting them, Quin observed to the ostler, "Are there any more such thieves and housebreakers as the ghost here, Dick?" To which Dick replied, "No; we be all honest folk, except the ghost; but Moll, cook, says this is the time of year for one Quin, I think she called 'un, a strolling play-actor, from Lunnun, to come down here, and I suppose we shall have nothing to boast of soon."

"How do you feel, Mr. Quin?" interrogated Ryan.

"As well as could be expected, thank you," answered the hero.

"It seems to make the hair on your wig stand on end," continued Ryan.

"Possibly so," replied Quin; "I can't tell how notorious a blackguard or thief the hair of my wig originally belonged to."

"That's singular," remarked Ryan. "I should have thought you would have taken pains on that particular. I always approve of your taste in perriwigs: the new one you have on now is an elegant specimen."

"I know not how good it may prove when paid for," answered Quin, as he trotted off; "but *at present* it has run me over head and ears in debt."

CHATSWORTH.*

WONDERFULLY diversified, considering it with reference to its extent, is the power now existing, and giving hourly such new proofs of its existence, in the several fields of tale, novel, and romance writing. Whatever points of difference may be detected between tales and novels, or novels and romances, they are multiplied a hundred times by the points of difference presented on comparing the qualities of the writing. Of the leading authors, ranking at the head of what may be called the Three-Volume Power, each has a range of subject, and a bold distinguishing impress, peculiarly his own; and that this is true of Mr. Plumer Ward, although the fact is by no means necessary as evidence of his claim to rank among the ablest writers of fiction in his day, no reader of "Tremaine" will hastily deny.

Here, then, with eminent powers of his own, and an unquestioned three-volume reputation which he can add to as he pleases, we have Mr. Ward coming forth as the good genius, the guardian angel of a work, written, as it would appear, expressly to prove that three volumes are no longer literary necessities,—that they cannot come into the class of useful expedients, and, in short, that they are evils to be dispensed with at the shortest notice.

Now there is nothing in the number three which is worth any sharp fighting in its defence; a tale—provided it be of equal length—in one volume, would be just as acceptable; but if the present be a grave proposal to cut down our novels into short and simple stories, and so to abridge our romances as to send them into the breathless world only half made up, we at once protest against it. If we must always go on living in a hurry, and time become yet more scarce and precious, let them try and lengthen the year—an hour or two added to the night in the full publishing season, there can be little objection to; but clip not the novel in two. Once admit the principle of reduction, and such is the eager, encroaching spirit of the age, that it will never be satisfied until "Tom Jones" is reduced to a mere skeleton,—an "abstract" of himself,—and "Waverley" re-written in a style of lucid brevity, to shew that it may be transmitted, printed on a single

* Chatsworth; or, the Romance of a Week. 3 vols. Edited by R. Plumer Ward.

sheet, by the penny post. Only let the notion prevail that the public may obtain within the compass of a volume the spirit of three, and when will the three ever meet again! The public would next desire the demolition of "Macbeth," under the guise of an abridgment or abstract, and content itself with a hasty perusal of its plot, narrated after the manner of the newspaper plots, of operas and farces, on the morning after production. That is the point to which the rush for condensation must infallibly come at last. But let us follow Mr. Ward to Chatsworth, where we arrive at the close of August.

It is a noble demesne. Within its classic walls a princely hospitality has collected,—we are assured,—"one of the most charmingly assorted companies that even the fine intellectual taste and consummate social tact of the noble host himself had ever before made acceptable to each other." After fitting pauses, and slow movements, betokening admiration unspeakable of the surpassing beauties around us, and the intellectual aristocracy into whose presence we are advancing, we stand within the magnificent library. There are the guests assembled, each in his best light, and nobody in another's. The group is strikingly formed, and all composing it are separately sketched with a masterly hand. The author of "Tremaine" should have been a not undistinguished member of the circle; but his portrait is omitted, for a very intelligible reason. Nevertheless, we have amongst the "chief stars in the constellation of illuminati," the "Genius" par excellence, and the "Lion" of the Chatsworth forests; the Lady of Circassian form, who, ensconced in the deep recesses of a luxurious reading-chair, listens to a handsome dandy, and is the only lady-writer "whose pen ever acquired the power of a man's without losing the ease and grace of a woman's;" another, pictured as the "Dark Ladyée," who is proud and serene, though "with a worse ill within her breast than the fire-tortured victims in the Hell of Vathek;" and other real or imagined "illuminati," with names or with no names, for the guidance or the bewilderment of the reader.

These so happily congregated wits, though circled with refinements, are alive to the maxim of the vulgar currier in the fable, touching the superiority of leather; for literature is the one topic of their discourse, as fat oxen are the favourite themes of drovers; nor do they talk only—they write,—they doubtfully uphold the dignity of literature, by practising the art under the roof of their noble host, and thus contrive, with more cleverness than delicacy, to follow their vocation while enjoying his hospitality.

The romance of a week, then, consists in writing and reading to the assembled party at Chatsworth,—a series of stories, designed by their several authors to supersede the recognised Rule of Three in literary fiction.

Whether we owe to the pen of Mr. Ward any one of the six tales which constitute "the Chatsworth records," we presume not to guess, for he tells us nothing; but they are very striking, in their way, and have an air of freshness breathing of the free and romantic locality with which the editor associates them. The plot of an old Spanish play, or an incident in Boccaccio, furnishes the topic; nay, subjects nearer home have been seized,—the "Maid's Tragedy" yields one tale, and "Pericles" another.

We return to the opening, where some peculiarly clear and animated

sketches of Chatsworth and its neighbourhood place us for a time on the very spot whence the view is taken, and make us feel that we are on the threshold of the demesne of Chatsworth palace.

And yet it seems necessary to apologize for tracing the steps of our enthusiastic portrayer of its grandeur through the district he describes. Matlock has grown obsolete—some may even associate it with vulgarity, for it can be reached in a few hours, and for a few shillings. It is, therefore, "unreasonable" to ask people to be charmed with Matlock Bath.

"But when English spa-goers have expended all their spare admiration on the aristocratic 'finery' of Toeplitz and Carlsbad—(whose very innkeepers write themselves Countesses;) on the Greenwich fair gaiety, gambling, and gormandizing of Baden-Baden; on the cockney pastoralities of Wiesbaden; the sullen, snake-haunted seclusion of Schlangenbad; the leaden solitude (Schwein excepted) of Langen Schwalbach; the Regent's-park ruralities of Marienbad; the Primrose-hill prettiness of Kissengen; the tumble-down antiquity of Aix-la-Chapelle; and, in short, all the other manifold wonders and beauties of all the other spas that it is their present pleasure to patronise;—when, we say, English spa-hunters have exhausted and grown tired of all these, they may, perchance, think it worth while to bestow a glance (merely out of curiosity) at a spot, which as much surpasses them all in picturesque beauty, and scenic grandeur and sublimity, as its pure, limpid, life-giving springs surpass in salubrity the dirty ditch-water, and the '*in*convenient distance,' to which the places we have named owe their celebrity."

That little nest of human dwellings, whose sea-coal smoke rises up, a light-blue mist, from the invisible vale below, whose roofs give shelter in what, but a comparatively few years ago, was a wild and inaccessible ravine, formed out of the broken faces of a rock rent asunder, must, indeed, have been planted there by that religious love of nature and her works which breathes throughout these descriptions. One glimpse more of Matlock Bath:

"There is not in all Matlock Bath half-a-dozen square yards of natural level: the road that traverses the hamlet is cut out of the solid rock, on the left or west bank of the stream (the Derwent) that runs at the bottom of the ravine; the buildings are, as it were, cemented into the receding face of the rock, on the same side of the river, and rise behind and above each other, tier above tier; the approach to every one of them is by a steep artificial terrace, that terminates when the dwelling is reached; and you have only to suppose the case of some giant hand agitating for a moment the green mountain side, and all the dwellings that cling to it would drop off into the water-course below, like insects from a shaken leaf!"

If only for the sake of a more beautiful and impressive reflection eloquently conveyed, let us follow the writer from the terrace of the Old Bath into the stony jaws of the ravine, where the wooded heights and precipitous cliffs rise often above the clouds.

"But, buried as we are in this marble mausoleum of the living, (for every building about us is formed of the rude marble which constitutes the entire district,) the impressions which come to us from without, are touched and coloured by anything but funereal associations. The smiling pastures, and the sparkling river that hurries or lapses through them, glance and peep at us through the trees at every step, telling tales of pastoral peace, that nothing around threatens to mar; and the towering heights above, on either hand, and in front, are clothed and crowned with that luxuriant 'pomp of groves,' and that lovely garniture of clustering shrubs and clasping parasites, which, from the multitudinous LIFE that lurks or sports within and among them, cannot be contemplated, even from the confines of the grave itself, without a feeling that DEATH is but a baseless abstraction of the human mind, and that Nature knows it not."

And, if our earnest and eloquent guide be a little over-wrathful with that "pestilent demon of commerce," who has desecrated and de-

formed the natural loveliness of the southern side of Matlock Bath, he must be forgiven, as the fiery mood is one that enables him to turn the deformity to poetry. He pictures midway up the side of some fair forest-clothed hill, "everlastingly overlooking the vale, for miles around, *with its innumerable eyes*, a vast cotton-mill."

Again, by the soft margin of the river, whose face is broken into sparkling dimples, "a never-ceasing noise of innumerable hammers issues from the blackened walls, that, day and night, in sunshine and in moonlight, vomit forth volleys of poisonous smoke, that blast the trees all round, till no bird will sing there." Yet poetry finds strange nooks, and is not absent even there.

In contrast with all this, and with the perfect taste and harmonized beauty of the Palace of the Peak, stands Edensor, the "Duke's own village," and his *one* mistake. We pass the aristocratic hostelry, with its pillared porticoes and carpeted saloons, rendering yet more exquisitely beautiful the little Gothic inn of the lovely pastoral village of Rowsley, overhanging the Derwent, and so Isaac-Waltonized, that every object about the place breathes of his delightful book. We are in the pattern-village of Edensor, looking at diminutive flower-gardens and diminutive dwellings, bearing a marked resemblance to the pretty plaster-of-Paris light houses of the Italian image-boys. They are fairy habitations. The windows are unsulliedly bright—the draperies immaculately white. The very smoke out of those elegant chimneys issues bluely and gracefully as the curling wreaths from a meerchaum. This wicked writer, when he first saw them, seems to have fancied that they were alms-houses for decayed dandies. But the mystery is explained. The "romance in stucco" is neither more nor less than a real village, inhabited by real peasants and labourers, who live on bread and bacon!

THE PATTERN-VILLAGE OF EDENSOR.

"But no—the blank silence that reigns everywhere throughout this seemingly favoured spot, even now that the labours of the day are over, proclaims something apart from ordinary village life—something, if not wrong, *too right*, about this rural La Trappe,—where the men, and the women too, seem to have forgotten how to talk, the dogs how to bark, the cats how to mew, and even the birds how to sing: and as for the little children, they have evidently never come to their tongues at all—a 'hush!' or an upheld finger, being the extent of their intercourse with their parents and with one another!

"Seriously, this pattern village of Edensor is the prettiest idea imaginable—on paper; and there it is that the Duke must alone have contemplated it, before carrying the design of his architect into effect; or his fine natural taste would have predicted the almost painfully-artificial result.

"The case is simply this: on the spot at present occupied by the model village of Edensor, there not long ago stood, within the very precincts of the park, a squalid hamlet, comprising the usual amount of tumble-down cottages, reeking dung-heaps, dreary duck-ponds, draggletailed mothers, dowdy daughters, dirty-faced children, and all the accompanying ills and eye-sores that English poverty is heir to; not forgetting the usual proportion of those amiable inventions of modern legislation, where boor and beer are 'licensed to be drunk on the premises':—in short, a very blotch upon the fair aristocratic face of Chatsworth; an unwholesome, unsightly eruption, for which, all ordinary modes of treatment being tried in vain, there was none left but the empirical one, of *driving the disease inwards*. And this, by the shallow counsel of his estate's physician, the good, kind, and generous Duke has adopted, little guessing the fatal result upon the patient, and as little likely to learn it from *that* quarter as from any other,—seeing that the disease we are dying of is always the last to which we believe ourselves liable. The least reputable and tractable of the quondam inhabitants of Edensor have been relegated to a village about a mile off, erected purposely for them by the Duke; and the *élite* have been

installed in this *beau*-ideal of a village, at an almost nominal rent, but under a tenure, the conditions of which may be guessed from what we have observed while looking on this prettiest and most plausible of mistakes—which can only be described by negatives. It has no shops, no smithy, no 'public,' no pound, no pump;—no cage, no stocks;—no quoits, no single-stick, no wrestling, no kite-flying, no cricketing, no trap-ball, no pitch and toss, no dumps;—no shouting, no singing, no hallooing, no squabbling, no scolding;—no love-making, no gossiping, no tittle-tattle, no scan—Yes! one thing the miserable denizens of this 'happy village' have gained, in vice of their elevation in the scale of social life: they may scandalize one another to their hearts' content! And it is to be hoped that they do so; for what is left but scandal, to those whose lives must be conducted in a whisper?"

We offer no apology for introducing this admirable picture, since, if the reader have seen the original, it will vividly recal a spot which must have amusingly impressed him; and if he have never viewed in reality the pattern-village, he has easily obtained as distinct an idea of it as a Canaletti could have given him. We are thus brought to the Park and the Palace, to the meeting of the illuminati, and the romance of a week.

WHEN TO LEAVE OFF.

BY LAMAN BLANCHARD.

"When to begin" is the first grand lesson Life has to learn; for the study of it must precede even the consideration of the important question, "What we are to begin with," seeing that we can have no useful searching into that secret, until we know when to begin. This first lesson learnt, the next grand one that arises is—"When to leave off;" without perfectly comprehending which, all investigation else will probably be unavailing.

The infallible teacher of his kind, humanity's best expositor and adviser, reminds us of that tide in men's affairs, "which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;" and thus forcibly impresses upon us the immensity of the interests involved in the question, "When to begin." But having taken the tide at the moment of flood, "When to leave off" is as essential a point of study; for only by knowing the ebb-time can we avoid those "shallows and miseries," in which our lives are bound when we commence in ignorance and rashness.

The lesson, which should be second on the list of practical ones, is rarely taught effectively in youth. At school, it is neglected on both sides; the master seldom attends to it in his admonitions, and never in his floggings; and the scholar heeds it as little either in the play-ground, in his pugilism, or at the pastry-cook's. A few years pass, and the youth still stands in need of the unlearned lesson. He begins a flirtation, and knows not when to leave off. He enters rashly into matrimony, repents with equal alacrity, and never knows when to leave off. Perhaps he now grows cautious; he holds a tight rein over his boys, to keep them out of his own disastrous courses; he drives them into a road of his own choosing, urges them to ends unsuitable to them, by means the most inconsiderate; and perseveres in exercising an unnatural control over their inclinations, until they bolt—to bear

with them through life the sting of an early recollection, and the disposition to trace all subsequent wrong-doing to the first wrong guidance, and the undue pressure of arbitrary authority.

What, in the wide range of human influence, can be more softening, more refining, more calculated to elevate, to delight, and to sustain, than a mother's loving care for her children; but then the history of a thousand families in every city, of almost every family in some degree, shews us but too plainly, that her uncontrolled and all-indulging fondness, exquisitely beautiful in its flower, may bear bitter fruit. Her affection twines closely round its object, enervating not unfrequently what it should invariably strengthen; her exaggerated estimate of dawning merits has sometimes killed them before noon, and her affectionate culture has nipped many a promise in the bud. The virtue lost by mistaken training she assumes to be still striking deeper root, and unfailingly with this mistake of partiality grows a fatal blindness to faults. Her fond heart overflowed at first, and never knew when to leave off.

Equally evident are the mistakes of the head, hourly committed in the career of ambition, the pursuit of power, the acquisition of wealth and fame. The vast, insatiable Briarean-handed genius grasps at a hundred *and one* objects, and loses all. The ruler of states, the conqueror in every battle, covered with laurels, carries the war into his own household, and demands implicit submission from his wife; not knowing when to leave off, the victor is subdued, and without enjoying the glory of strife, forfeits when he needs them the blessings of peace. So the builder-up of fortunes, knowing when to begin, grasps with boyish fingers the breeding coin—clutches, gathers, and accumulates, piles up ingot upon ingot, and sleeps on money-bags; but all his thoughts, studies, speculations, having centred in the first grand lesson, he has been at length too unmindful of the significance of the second, and he wakes as from a dream, his gold having melted under him like snow. So the poet who has rhymed himself into fame, rhymes himself again into obscurity; the orator who has charmed his audience, dissolves the spell by wearying them; the advocate, having skilfully won eleven jurymen to his side, to puzzle and confound the twelfth, desperately proves too much, and ends with having the whole dozen against him. All these are among the knowing ones, who lack the essential knowledge—when to leave off.

The want is not much to be wondered at, manifested in individuals or in classes; since foreigners have not been slow to bring the charge against us as a nation. The French always insist that they brought the battle of Waterloo to its proper and natural close; to a point, that is to say, at which we were legitimately beaten; but the British, it will be remembered, did not exactly know when to leave off. This extraordinary ignorance has always been a marked characteristic of our navy.

In the pursuit of excellence in any art, it may be advisable to stop short of perfection—to leave off, just before it is attained. It will not be comprehended, and the result will be failure. There are instances on record of the discomfiture and defeat attendant upon entire success. Not to mention the case of the pig, whose squeaking was soundly hissed for its vile pretensions to the accuracy of the human imitator,

there were recorded not long ago, the disasters of a grainer of woods and marbles. His painted resemblances of mahogany and scagliola were so exact and true, that the eye wandered over their polished surfaces without discerning their merits. Not knowing when to leave off, the unfortunate professor had made them perfect. Everybody judged them to be the real things, and nobody admired. He fell a victim to his excellence—ruined by success. Now there are portrait-painters, and other artists of various grades, who seem to be well aware of this danger, and studiously avoid all such accuracy of resemblance.

Actors, when they introduce their own elegances of dialogue to give a grace and effect to Congreve's, and having made an exit, return within the wing three times to throw the barren spectators into ecstasies, may be fairly classed with the most impudent scorners of the art of leaving off. Sailors, after a long voyage, terminating in shipwreck, are perfectly excusable, if, when seated before a round of beef, they seem wholly insensible of the existence of such an art. Young ladies engaged in new quadrilles, or older ones congregated at the tea-table, are not seriously to be rebuked, if they manifest a similar unconsciousness; it seems but natural.

Having made this liberal allowance, some indulgence may be extended, in consideration of the infirmities of the other sex, for the lovers of the fragrant weed, when a box of "particularly fine" is inconsiderately placed before them. Persons of mild tempers, plagued with vicious servants whom it is necessary to scold sharply at the outset, are not apt to leave off before the end of the quarter; but they ought to stop when they have given the irreclaimable one warning, which they seldom do: on the other hand, servants are apt naturally enough to scan the habits of their employers,—watching the wear of coats, cloaks, and cardinals, and coming, of course, to the conclusion that masters and mistresses never know when to leave off.

In the first class, if not foremost in it, of the neglectors of the art, we must place those distinguished and remorseless sportsmen, who, beating about in preserves where birds are "plenty as blackberries," return after a few hours, with two hundred and forty-seven partridges, a hundred and seventy-one pheasants, and ninety hares. "Leaving off" must be a phrase unknown in this select circle of dead shots, where "letting off" is the only thing to be done, and the sole difficulty is to miss; but since letting off is the rule, they might let a few of the birds off, considering the dozens and scores they had brought down before breakfast.

The secret worth knowing—when to leave off—is undiscoverable by the dram-drinker. The water-drinker is immersed in a still deeper sea of ignorance. He resembles the Irish orator, who began again before he left off. Having filled himself to the teeth with the limpid stream, he applies it externally; and, always awake to water, is not, even in sleep, out of his element. "His delights are dolphin-like." Lawyers, when they are making out their bills, are proverbially deficient in that important branch of knowledge to which we are alluding. The same may not unreasonably be alleged of many "medical attendants" when they have once knocked at your door. As for creditors, when they have fairly made up their minds to call upon a

defenceless gentleman merely because he owes them money, their habit is experimentally known to nine-tenths of the community.

A sad want of instruction on this head has long been evinced by London tradesmen in reference to hours of business; but they are learning the lesson at last, and the knowledge they are rapidly acquiring will doubtless prove both useful and entertaining to all employed on their establishments.

Of still graver importance is it, that the wisdom of the lesson should be instilled yet more deeply into the minds of mill-owners, and all whose manufacturing operations depend so materially upon Infant Labour. The little labourers in our factories, so slenderly informed on other subjects, can feel to their finger-tips and in their very eyelids, the philosophy of the question involved in "short hours." Short hours need but short arguments. Beautifully, and with an exquisite woman's instinct, sings Mrs. Norton, in that tenderest and most touching of her many admirable poems, the "Voice from the Factories"—

> "Ever a *toiling child* doth make us sad;"

the little toilers on the slack-wire, in equestrian circles and stage fairy-tales, not excepted; but what are these to the long tribe of street-sorrowers, or these again to the infant workers in the factory—

> "Where the air thick and close and stagnant grows,
> And the low whirring of the incessant wheel
> Dizzies the head, and makes the senses reel;"

Where for them the rich fulness of the joyful summer-day, but brings

> "A double curse of stifling, withering heat,"

which they must bear until the last weary hour of eve, when, worn with increasing torture and toil, they totter home, too sick to taste the food they need, too spent and exhausted for anything but sleep. And then—

> ——————"Unable to forget
> The anxious task's long heavy agonies,
> In broken sleep the victim labours yet!
> Waiting the boding stroke that bids him rise,
> He marks in restless fear each hour that flies;
> Anticipates the unwelcome morning prime;
> And murmuring feebly, with unwakened eyes,
> 'Mother, oh, mother! is it yet *the time?*'
> Starts at the moon's pale ray, or clock's far-distant chime."

How should the horrid day thus begun seem ever to have an end! "When to leave off," was for long years a question only settled by ascertaining when the feeble pulse stopped, and the dull tearless eyes opened no more. But the moan and the whisper of accumulated suffering and wrong have at length gathered into a loud cry, and abashed Humanity has heard.

Our Library Table.

THE NOVEL OF RURAL LIFE.

The Crock of Gold, a Rural Novel. 1 vol. By Martin Farquhar Tupper. —Those who are acquainted with the "Proverbial Philosophy," or other productions of Mr. Tupper, will scarcely expect him to write a novel in the style and manner of people in general. He scorns custom, and must impress the reader in his own way, or be silent. There is in the idea of a "rural novel" something that takes us clean out of the fashionable road; and we accordingly find ourselves a long way from modern Mayfair, or ancient history, when we arrive at the opening words of the tale—"Roger Acton woke at five"—and the announcement that this, the leading personage of the scene, is "about forty, or from that to fifty;" labour, want, and weather having used him roughly; that he figures in a patched and well-worn smock, heavily clouted high-laced boots, a dingy worsted neck-tye, and an old felt hat,—warns us at once of the ground we are entering upon.

When we are apprised that this specimen of the English agricultural labourer, who has hitherto, amidst severe toils and trials, been honest, patient, and industrious, has just begun to grumble and repine, to feel his wants bitterly, and to dream of finding gold, we are prepared to hear that he does find it, and that it burns his fingers; that his principles are insensibly undermined, his miseries multiplied past numbering, and his struggles with himself and circumstances are destined to carry him to the criminal bar, and thence, either forward to the grave, or back again to a cottage of content. All this happens; his ultimate destiny being the said cottage, rendered a hundred times more comfortable than it was before he became a rogue through his raging hunger for gold.

In the conduct of the story which thus terminates, there is scarcely more attempt at skilful mystification or adroit concealment of the course of matters. Events are related, the most important in the tale, and then we have several chapters explanatory of the circumstances which brought them about—the catastrophe first, and then the details. And yet the author, chapter by chapter, sustains the interest unbrokenly, and keeps us listening to the last.

We do not mean to imply anything in the least disparaging, when we say that we regard the "Crock of Gold," as a first-class melodrama, delightfully embellished, and exalted often into poetry; yet a melodrama of the "rural" order, set off with many graces of reflection, and many flashes of fancy.

The characters are in humble life, and they are not lifted out of it; what little they say is in their proper language; their sentiments belong to them, and what the author says for them is all right enough; but in what they do, there is often exaggeration for the sake of effect. "Steady Acton" steals a sovereign in an almost impossible way; and the great villain of the story, the steward Jennings, tyrannizes over and tramples upon him in the very presence of a just and good-natured master, with an impunity that, to say the least of it, is strained. This is no grave objection in general novel-writing, but it is something in a tale which is designed to represent a natural order of things, and whose truth and completeness of effect depend upon fidelity. And the author appears to admit such a dependence, when he tells us (p. 112) that his story "purports to be a Dutch picture as becometh boors, their huts, their short and simple annals; so that, after its moralities, the mass of minute detail is the only thing that gives it any value."

There is considerable exaggeration in the death-scene of the detected villain Jennings; and the description of the murder which he commits—all the incidents of his struggle with an aged woman, and the details of her strangulation, being elaborately given—is an example of the power of portraying horrors, the effect of which is simply revolting.

Here ends objection,—objection which the story can well afford,—for we shall not vehemently protest against a good-hearted poacher being won from his illegal practices by the appointment to a keepership; nor will we quarrel with old Roger's luck in getting back all the rent he had paid, with an exemption from payment in the golden evening of his life.

The sketch of the old labourer's daughter, Grace Acton, is to be extremely admired. Simple and lofty-minded, pious and pure of heart, her affectionate devotion to her poor tempted father, who has fallen so suddenly, and from such a height, is eminently beautiful; and her tender, graceful, natural bearing, in the scenes with her humble and honest lover, brings love into the heart as we read.

The tale offers but few advantages in the way of extract, the reflections with which it abounds are so interwoven with it. We copy one of the few general remarks; it arises naturally out of the niggardly disposition evinced by the deluded and half-crazy Roger, when he has found the gold he covets, and become rich:

"It is astonishing how immediately wealth brings in, as its companion, meanness: they walk together, and stand together, and kneel together, as the hectoring, prodigal Faulconbridge, the Bastard Plantagenet in King John, does with his white-livered, puny brother, Robert. Wherefore, no sooner was Roger blest with gold, than he resolved not to be such a fool as to lose liberally, or to give away one farthing. To give, I say, for extravagant indulgence is another thing; and it was a fine, proud pleasure to feast a lot of fellows at his sole expense. If meanness is brother to wealth, it is at any rate first cousin to extravagance.

"When the dowager collects 'her dear five hundred friends' to parade before the fresh young heirs her wax-light lovely daughters—when all is glory, gallopade, and Gunter—when Rubini warbles smallest, and Lablache is heard as thunder on the stairs—speak, tradesmen, ye who best can tell, the closeness that has catered for that feast; tell it out, ye famished milliners, ground down to sixpence on a ball-dress bill; whisper it, ye footmen, with your wages ever due; let Gath, let Ascalon re-echo with the truth, that extortion is the parent of extravagance!"

This is followed by a touching and beautiful picture of the family of the altered father, and the horrible increase of desolation in the cottage which follows the possession of the fatal crock of gold. How far less desolate—rather, how radiant is the prison, which is the next scene in the sad history. The daughter makes a sunshine there, and in that beautiful light the father sees into his own heart, and is penitent. "We will leave thee," runs the sweet music of the moralist, "in the cold stone cell, with thy well-named angel Grace to comfort thee, and pray with thee, and help thee back to God again, and so repay the debt a daughter owes her father. Happy prison! where the air is sweetened by the frankincense of piety, and the pavement gemmed with the flowers of hope, and the ceiling arched with heaven's bow of mercy, and the walls hung around with the dewy drapery of penitence!"

The scriptural references, and the scriptural style, often introduced, give a peculiar character, both to the ordinary narrative and the reflections which adorn it. There are many, many other passages of a less studied and ambitious character, which the memory would willingly bring away with it, and treasure among its sweetest records—passages of high poetic thought and deeply-felt morality. We gratefully offer thanks to the writer for another pleasure.

SKETCHES FROM ABROAD.

Antigua and the Antiguans. 2 vols.—Chronology, in such a colony as the lovely and fertile island of Antigua, is little more than a collection of calamities—of fires, fevers, earthquakes, insurrections, and convulsions infinite. That "old almanac," its history, has but few red-letter days in it. Take the recent record of occurrences in Antigua—for we have not the remotest chance of accompanying our author in his backward researches, to trace out the early history of the colony. To go no further than the year 1828—that period will be remembered as the season in which the "dandy fever" prevailed—a dis-

tressing malady, that took its name from the strange gestures which its excruciating agonies occasioned the unfortunate sufferers to exhibit. In 1831, there was an insurrection among the negroes, occasioned by the ill-managed suppression of Sunday-markets. The year 1833 was rendered memorable by the severe shocks of earthquake felt at Antigua, as well as at most of the islands throughout the chain—these being followed by a season of dry weather that rendered the fertile little island a barren waste. The red-letter day dawned next—a bright one in the colonial calendar of Great Britain—1833 being celebrated throughout the civilized world as the year of the abolition of slavery; but more particularly was it celebrated by the Antiguans, who, laying aside all claims to apprenticeship, gave their negroes immediate freedom—and a most gratifying, a most exulting reflection it is, that they have never had reason to repent their promptitude and humanity. The year following, 1835, brought with it a scene of fearful hurricane, and not long after, the yellow fever broke out with terrible malignancy. Things, however, have since been looking a little more steady and hopeful; and a gradual progress is reported—the authority being that of an eye-witness, who, though not a West Indian, appears to be an ardent lover of the localities he describes.

Of the sixty thousand acres which form the extent of this island, about four-fifths probably are in a state of cultivation. It was, we are told, the opinion of many planters, soon after emancipation, that the mountainous estates must, in a great measure, be neglected, as the steadiness of the negro is not always to be depended on, and the plough would be useless. These prognostications, says our informant, have not been fulfilled; "on the contrary, in my rides through the country, I have seen many spots of land which once bore only grass, or wild shrubs planted with canes, and bearing the title of a sugar-estate, which, had slavery continued, would never have been cultivated." Still he admits that agricultural labourers are wanted; for the free negro, looking upon his patriarchal occupations as disgraceful because practised in his bondage, frequently quits the country, to turn mason, or carpenter, tempted by high wages, which he is incompetent to earn. These errors, however, are sure to cure themselves, as naturally as it is natural to commit them.

The writer has been long in the island, and seems intimately acquainted with everything worthy of reporting to the mother-country, and much that is not worth reporting at all. He gives, besides a full historical account of the colony and its inhabitants from the time of the Caribs, an interesting, and perhaps on the whole, an impartial view of the slavery and the free-labour systems. The rest of his closely printed volumes is composed of anecdotes and legends, written in a style sufficiently glowing and florid; statistical accounts, neighboured by extracts from our colonist's favourite poets, who are not few in number; and by biographical notices of the principal families in and out of the churchyard.

We find space for a short extract. The first brief passage is characteristic of the events recorded, the inhabitants of the island, and the author himself. An earthquake happened at St. Kitts, just as all the aristocracy were clustered in the gayest of groups at a ball in the court-house.

"I chanced to visit St. Kitts a short time after this awful occurrence. The inhabitants were still trembling from apprehension; and upon the slightest motion of the floor, the colour fled from the lips of many of the fair sex, and left them of a pallid white. I was present, upon one occasion, when a gentlemen requested a young lady to favour him with a song. 'Oh, no, sir! you must excuse me,' said she, lengthening her very pretty face, and throwing an air of gravity into her countenance; 'we never sing since the earthquake.' *If no other good was effected*, it had the power of alienating her mind (for a season at least) from some of the vanities of the world, if a simple song can be called one."

Earthquakes at St. Kitts are not such momentous things; otherwise one might be of opinion that this was but a small matter for an earthquake to accomplish—the task of stopping a young lady's singing, "for a season at least."

Two Years in France and Switzerland, by Martha Macdonald Lamont. 1 vol. —The letters, journals, and diaries, records of tours, and reminiscences of travel, that have been written during the last thirty years, from the places described and commemorated in this little volume, would, if spread out in sheets of various sizes, almost suffice to cover the ground travelled over. What praise, then, we bestow upon that writer, to whom we tender thanks for a most pleasant entertainment upon such a subject—for information brought delightfully back to memory, mingled with novelty, and for a sense of freshness and animation pervading the whole record, so as almost to make us feel that we have been travelling instead of reading.

Such is the greeting we cordially give to the author of these impressions, thoughts, and sketches, which are amongst the most just, sensible, unaffected, and lively of their class. The writer joins to the kindliest feeling, and an amiability which, ever desirable in our countrywomen, is especially to be wished for in those who travel, a generally clear-seeing sense, and an unprejudiced judgment, power of observation and power of remark, good humour, frankness, and a skill or a simplicity in writing that leaves nothing obscure or mistakeable, whether we like her sketch and opinion or not. Amongst the most agreeable letters are those from the boarding-schools and houses of Paris; but there is considerable piquancy in others, with grace and playfulness of description, where the subject admits of it. Critical remarks, generally in excellent taste, on such specimens of literature and art as are casually presented, are scattered over the letters, which contain also a few fragments of verse, that are very far from being unembellishing to the text.

The Gleaner. By Mrs. C. J. Parkerson. 2 vols.—To collect the opinions of the great and good on subjects which refer to the daily practice of individuals and society, is this lady's professed object in forming a very miscellaneous assortment of scraps into two comely volumes. The preface is sensible in its tone; but the remark, "it has been an object to avoid such extracts as have appeared in other collections, and to bring forward such as are in danger of being neglected," is amusingly contradicted by scores of the pages that follow; wherein we find among the extracts that have not appeared in other collections, the Byronian enigma (the letter *h*), beginning—

"'Twas whisper'd in Heaven, 'twas mutter'd in Hell;"

and among the passages that are in danger of being neglected, we notice some stanzas, commencing with this totally unknown assertion—

"All that's bright must fade,
The brightest still the fleetest;"

followed by a now-forgotten announcement, made by some obscure Eastern lady, one who—

"Never loved a tree or flower
But 'twas the first to fade away;"

together with a poetical reference to the dark eye of a certain graceful animal, who was sure to die the moment it came to know its mistress well, and to love her.

This objection, however, if it be one, does not apply generally to the collection, much of which is unknown, as some of it perhaps deserves to be. The extracts are all chosen with the nicest moral propriety, and may safely be committed to the perusal of the young.

Irish Music.—In this department we anticipate an interesting novelty this month. Mr. Lover, whose name is so successfully identified with the song and the story of his native land, promises a lecture on the Music and National Character of Ireland, with vocal illustrations. We rejoice that Mr. Lover undertakes this duty for Ireland. Poet and musician as he is, the cause is in worthy hands.